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WINSLOW HOMER

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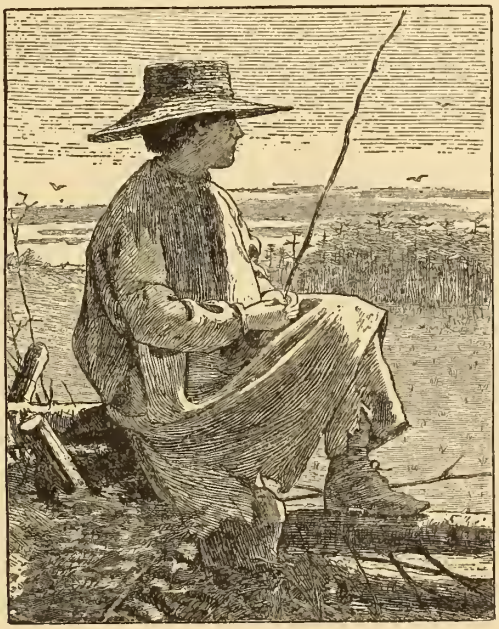
By Lloyd Goodrich



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CONTENTS

Foreword . . . vii

I. Boston . . . 1

II. The Civil War . . . 11

III. Homer in His Thirties . . . 23

IV. The Middle Years . . . 55

V. England . . . 76

VI. The Eighteen-Eighties . . . 83

VII. The Eighteen-Nineties . . . 103

VIII. Old Age . . . 158

Recollections of an Intimate Friendship
By John W. Beatty . . . 205

Chronology . . . 228

Notes . . . 229

Bibliography . . . 234

Index . . . 237

Illustrations . . . 243

Index to the Illustrations . . . 245

FOREWORD

LIKE every biography, this could not have been written without the collaboration of many individuals who generously contributed their knowledge and time. I wish to express my deep indebtedness to all who have helped me:

To Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney, founder of the Whitney Museum of American Art, to Mrs. Juliana Force, its director, and to the trustees of the Museum, whose wholehearted support of the project made it possible for me to devote the long time needed for research.

To the late Robert W. Macbeth of the Macbeth Gallery and to Carmine Dalesio of the Babcock Galleries. Mr. Dalesio for years had been gathering information on Homer's work, and in 1936 he and Mr. Macbeth began compiling a catalogue. When it became known that I was doing the same thing, Mr. Macbeth and Mr. Dalesio, to avoid duplication and help make the record complete, generously left the field to me, made available all their material, and cooperated to the fullest extent. Since Mr. Macbeth's untimely death the same invaluable cooperation has been continued by Robert G. McIntyre and Miss Hazel Lewis of the Macbeth Gallery.

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To Edith Havens Goodrich for help in research and criticism of the text.

The catalogue of Homer's work is being published in a separate volume.

L. G.

WINSLOW HOMER

I

BOSTON

When Winslow Homer was an old man his future biographer William Howe Downes, art critic of the Boston *Transcript*, who had long admired his work but had never met him, wrote him broaching the subject of a book, and received this characteristic reply: "It may seem ungrateful to you that after your twenty-five years of hard work in booming my pictures that I should not agree with you in regard to that proposed sketch of my life. But I think that it would probably kill me to have such a thing appear, and as the most interesting part of my life is of no concern to the public I must decline to give you any particulars in regard to it."

So whatever we know about Homer's life is what Downes and others learned from his family and friends after his death, what appears in his letters and in contemporary accounts, and most important of all, what can be found in his work, where like every artist he left the most complete record of himself.

II

Winslow Homer was a Yankee born and bred, and a descendant of generations of Yankees. There had been Homers in Massachusetts for almost two centuries before his birth. The first to come to America was Captain John Homer, born about 1647 in England, possibly at Bristol, master and part owner of a ship trading between London and Boston, who in middle life settled in the latter city, went into business, and married Margery Stevens. From them descended a vigorous and long-lived clan. Winslow Homer's great-grandfather lived to eighty-one, his grandfather to eighty-six and his father to eighty-nine. All were born and lived in Boston and married Boston women. Most of them engaged in foreign trade, and while not rich were solid citizens. The artist's grandfather, Eleazer Homer, great-grandson of

Captain John, was an importer and exporter, living in a comfortable house at the corner of Hanover and Union Streets. He married Mary Bartlett, daughter of Captain Abraham Bartlett, and had seven sons, of whom Winslow's father, Charles Savage Homer, born in 1809, carried on the family tradition by going into business for himself as an importer of hardware.

A similar mercantile, middle-class background appeared in the artist's maternal ancestry. His grandfather, John Benson of Boston, was a merchant in the West Indies trade and like Eleazer Homer lived to be over eighty-five. His portraits show a handsome man, elegantly dressed, with a masterful, determined face. He married Sally Buck of Bucksport, Maine, and fathered ten children, of whom Henrietta Maria, future mother of Winslow, was born in 1809 in Bucksport and brought up in Cambridge. The Bensons were comfortably off and were considered in Cambridge to be "very stylish folks." Henrietta, who was spoken of as "dressy," was well educated at a young ladies' school, where among other things she studied watercolor painting, like most girls of the time. With her, however, art was more than a ladylike accomplishment leading to marriage but ending with it. She took lessons after she was married and continued to paint in the leisure moments of a busy life. Her watercolors, almost all of flowers, show a talent far above the average amateur's. Every petal and leaf, every dew-drop and butterfly, were pictured with loving care. The vision was naïve and pure; it would be hard to say whether the artist was more intent on beauty or botanical exactness, but to so fresh a mind the two must have been one. Though not professionally skilled, the drawing was delicate and precise; the color, of a brilliancy rivalling flowers themselves, was never tawdry; while the whole design of blossom and leaf and tendril revealed a genuine decorative instinct. With its captivating combination of naïveté and inborn artistry, her work is capable of standing on its own merits, aside from its interest as the source of her son's gift.

Henrietta Maria Homer took her work seriously enough to exhibit it occasionally in professional shows to which her famous son also sent, as in the Brooklyn Art Association in the early 1870's. She kept on painting into old age, and on Christmas 1881, two years before her death, she presented to her daughter-in-law a bound volume of her best flower studies, inscribed:

Whose busy fingers, at three-score years,
From nature's forms and tints, produced
This handiwork; that when beneath the daisies
Those fingers are at rest:
These flowers might yield of her joyous life
A fragrant memory.

Those who remember her say that she was a woman of exceptional character, gay, witty and generous; and that Winslow was devoted to her, and she took great pride in him. One of Winslow's cousins used to say, "He got it all from his mother. She was always painting pictures. I went to see her *just* before Winslow was born, and she had on a big pinafore and was standing before a large easel painting."

The Charles Savage Homers had three children, all sons—Charles Savage, Jr., Winslow, two years younger, and Arthur Benson, five years younger than Winslow. The future artist was born in their home at 25 Friend Street, Boston, February 24th, 1836. The spot, now given over entirely to business, was at this time residential, though not in a class with Beacon Hill. Like many American families the Homers were migratory, living in five different houses during Winslow's childhood and youth. Shortly after his birth they moved to 7 Bulfinch Street, near Bowdoin Square. When he was about six they went out to Cambridge, first to a house on Main Street (now Massachusetts Avenue) and shortly after to a more comfortable home in Garden Street, facing the Common and near the Washington Elm. Cambridge was still a big village, with the country just beyond, and the Homer boys and their numerous cousins had a healthy, happy country childhood, to which Winslow always looked back with pleasure. He was devoted to his older brother Charlie and the two were inseparable, as they were to remain all their lives.

Most of our knowledge of these early years comes from an article by George William Sheldon in the *Art Journal* in 1878, for which Homer must have supplied the facts. After speaking of his boyhood in Cambridge, Sheldon said: "He has a great liking for country life—a liking which he thinks had its origin in the meadows, ponds, fishing, and beautiful surroundings of that suburban place. To this day there is no recreation that Mr. Homer prefers to an excursion into the country."

He attended the Washington Grammar School in Cambridge. A girl schoolmate who used to sit next to him when he was about fifteen remembered him as "a nice boy—studious, quiet, sedate." His love of drawing showed at an early age; like all young artists he surreptitiously decorated his textbooks, and he copied at least one of his mother's pictures. His parents did not attempt to suppress him; his mother could not have been anything but sympathetic, and according to Sheldon his father "encouraged his leaning towards art, and on one occasion when on a visit to London sent him a complete set of lithographs by Julian—representations of heads, ears, noses, eyes, faces, trees, houses, everything that a young draughtsman might fancy trying his hand at—and also lithographs of animals by Victor Adam which the son hastened to make profitable use of." Of his youthful drawings Sheldon reported that in the 1870's he still had "a pile of crayon reproductions of all sorts of things, made as early as 1847, each picture being supplemented by his full name and the exact date in careful juvenile fashion." The few that have survived are unusual for a child in that even at ten years he was drawing from life, with little childish naïveté, but with strength and observation that one would not expect for several years.

Unlike New York and Philadelphia, with their long-established art academies, Boston at this time had little to offer in the way of art. The home of Copley, Stuart and Allston was now more renowned for letters than for the fine arts. William Morris Hunt, the apostle of the Barbizon school, was not to settle there until 1862, and William Rimmer did not start his art school until 1864. The Museum of Fine Arts was still years in the future. The chief art institution was the venerable Boston Athenaeum, so little resembling Athens that when William Page's *Venus* hung in an exhibition, "the visitors glanced hastily at it, quickening their steps." As for Harvard, as Hunt said, "Cambridge is like Kaulbach's pictures. It is all literature." "At the time young Homer was first led to some form of art-expression," wrote his friend J. Eastman Chase, "there was in Boston but one school of drawing—that in the old Lowell Institute. . . . It was like young Homer not to go to this academy and draw piles of cubes in perspective, to be carefully and properly shaded." Indeed, if he ever studied art anywhere in Boston, there is no record of it.

In 1849 the elder Homer caught the prevailing gold fever, gave up his Boston business and loading a ship with mining machinery and sending it around Cape Horn, set out himself by the shorter Panama route. On reaching the Coast he found that his company's claim had been jumped and he was unable to regain possession. When he left home his new brassbound trunks had aroused his boys' admiration; when he came back two years later his bag was tied with a string.

His son Charles said later: "When we moved to Cambridge the idea was to give us boys an education but I was the only one that wiggled through Harvard College. Win wanted to draw." But when the time came for him to choose a profession, at about nineteen, his parents did not consider art seriously. Family finances were still low, and there was talk of his becoming a clerk in a Cambridge gent's-furnishings store. One morning his father saw a newspaper advertisement to this effect: "Boy wanted; apply to Bufford, lithographer; must have a taste for drawing; no other wanted." John H. Bufford, head of Boston's leading lithographic house, was a friend of the elder Homer and a member of the fire company of which the latter was foreman—"in those days," Sheldon hastens to add, "the fire department in New England towns was conducted by gentlemen." "There's a chance for Winslow!" exclaimed his father, and application was made to Bufford. The boy was accepted on trial for two weeks. He suited, and was apprenticed until he should come of age. The usual terms were $300 to be paid the master for learning the trade; after a year the apprentice was to receive five dollars a week. But in view of the boy's aptitude the bonus was reduced to $100.

Bufford's establishment was one of the largest in the country, employing a hundred people and producing an enormous quantity of lithographed work — framing-prints, music-sheets, cards, posters, books, magazines. Homer's first job was designing illustrated covers for popular songs—"Katy Darling," "Oh Whistle and I'll Come to You, My Lad," "Annie Lawrie" and "Minnie Clyde." Some of these were copied from earlier designs or from photographs. In all he followed the conventional sentimental style of the day, but with surprising skill. Bufford soon discovered that he had an apprentice of unusual ability and turned over to him the more exacting pictorial designs, leaving the routine work to other apprentices. His crowning

achievement was a large print of the entire Massachusetts senate—forty-two separate portraits, probably from photographs — a remarkably able piece of work for a youth of twenty. But for anyone so independent the work at Bufford's was slavery. At best it was designing banalities, or copying photographs or other artists' pictures. And no matter how fine the drawing, it was the shop that got the credit (though Homer smuggled his initials onto as many stones as he could). No wonder that Sheldon said, doubtless quoting him: "His sojourn there was a treadmill existence. Two years at that grindstone unfitted him for further bondage; and, since the day he left it, he has called no man master." The hours at the shop were eight to six. Often in the summer he would get up at three and walk two miles to Fresh Pond to fish before breakfast, returning to catch the omnibus to Boston.

Among his fellow apprentices at Bufford's were the future painters Joseph E. Baker and Joseph Foxcroft Cole. Baker remembered young Homer as short, delicately built, with a good figure, a shock of dark brown hair, hazel eyes, a little moustache, and a patchy beard. He carried himself very straight and used to work standing up, so as not to get round-shouldered. He displayed little emotion or change of expression; if Bufford did not like his work he never showed any feeling about it. His cleverness in drawing was noticeable from the first. Some of his employer's time he spent making sketches for his own amusement. He was self-sufficient and did not seem to care for anybody. Of girls he spoke in a "remote" tone. Baker got the impression that he had plenty of money; "a luxurious chap" and "as fine as silk." He hated the work at Bufford's.

Already he had determined to become a painter. Once in a Boston picture gallery when the three apprentices were looking at a genre picture by Edouard Frère, a kitchen interior with figures, Homer remarked, "I am going to paint." Asked what kind of work he intended to do, he pointed to the Frère and replied, "Something like that, only a damned sight better." To Cole he said, during his first year of apprenticeship, "If a man wants to be an artist, he should never look at pictures."

He had also made up his mind to support himself by illustration. On his twenty-first birthday, when his two years' apprenticeship was over, he left Bufford's and rented a studio in the Ballou Publishing House building on

Winter Street. This firm published one of the leading illustrated weeklies of the day, *Ballou's Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion*, with a circulation, huge for the time, of over a hundred thousand; as well as *Ballou's Dollar Monthly* and the *Flag of Our Union*, all described in the words of a contemporary writer as "beautiful specimens of art and pleasing and pure caskets of literature." "Mr. Ballou," the writer added, "never admits an indelicate allusion, an innuendo of doubtful tendency, or aught else that can corrupt, to find its way into the columns of his paper. . . . These publications may be placed in the hands of the wife, the daughter, the son, or any within the sacred circle of home, in perfect confidence that their effect will only prove salutary. Of how few publications can we thus speak." And indeed, compared to such rowdy New York magazines as *Leslie's* or the *New-York Illustrated News*, *Ballou's Pictorial* was singularly pure. Instructive articles on foreign lands, biographies and portraits of irreproachable public figures, and fiction of unquestionable propriety were to be found in it, but the controversial field of politics was shunned, crime news was taboo, and there was absolutely no humor except a weekly column of immaculate puns.

In these days before photomechanical methods, the commonest way of reproducing illustrations to be printed with type, was by wood-engraving. A word should be said about the process. The block, of boxwood because of its fine grain, was polished and coated with white, making a smooth surface pleasant to work on. On this the artist drew his picture, in reverse. The block was then turned over to the engraver, who cut away the bare white surface, leaving the drawn lines in relief, which when printed gave a reproduction of the original drawing. The drawing itself had been destroyed piecemeal in the process, and what emerged was a translation of it into the black lines of the woodblock. In a pure line picture the artist usually drew with a pen; in a picture in tone, with pencil and wash. The functions of artist and engraver were entirely separate; as far as we know Homer never cut a block himself. Sometimes artists sent in sketches on paper, to be redrawn on the block by a staff artist. Judging by the style of Homer's illustrations and by his existing preliminary sketches, he almost always drew directly on the block, in pencil and wash.

While at Bufford's he had met a French engraver, Damoreau, who worked

for *Ballou's Pictorial* and gave him pointers about drawing on the block so as to suit his style for engraving. (Later Damoreau was to cut many of his drawings for the magazine.) Homer's first contribution to *Ballou's* was a portrait, published June 6th, 1857, drawn from a photograph or a sketch by another artist, and thereafter a good half of his illustrations for the magazine were hack work of this kind. Even his portrait of Rembrandt Peale, done when the veteran painter was visiting Boston, was from a photograph and not from life. Photography was the latest thing and the publishers made a great point of their up-to-dateness in using it. But at the same time he was doing more original illustrations. The week following his debut appeared a lively street scene near Ballou's office, "drawn expressly for us by Mr. Winslow Homer, a promising young artist of this city." This was the first of a series of Boston scenes exploiting the picturesqueness of everyday city life as no previous illustrator had done, and introducing a new note of realism and humor into the stodgy pages of the *Pictorial.* The scenes were easily recognizable to Bostonians, and the young artist carefully lettered all the familiar shop signs.

In the meantime a new illustrated magazine had been launched in New York—*Harper's Weekly*. Backed by the great house of Harper, numbering among its authors Dickens, Wilkie Collins, Charles Reade and Bulwer-Lytton, attracting the best illustrators, and opening its columns to humorous drawings and political cartoons, it soon became the leading publication of its kind in the country, the one indispensable magazine for the library table of every well-regulated American home. A few months after its start Homer sent on some drawings of life at Harvard, including what was described as a "foot-ball" match in which, we may note, several players were wearing top hats. The illustrations were accepted and published on August 1st, 1857, in a two-page spread with a solemn article on college sports, and thereafter *Harper's* took everything he submitted, invariably giving him full pages and sometimes double pages. *Ballou's,* while always referring to "our artist" in the most flattering terms, only once allowed him more than a half page, so that while continuing to draw for them he was soon sending more and better work to *Harper's.*

His first illustrations for both magazines were Boston scenes—the world

of fashion promenading on Washington Street, women and children on the Common, class day at Harvard, street characters. In all of these the accent was on elegance. The women were pretty and stylish in their crinolines, the strutting males imposing in top hats and curling side whiskers. The young artist obviously had an eye for feminine beauty and a sense of fashion. Occasionally there might be a glimpse of the seamier side of city life, but the usual emphasis was on its pleasant aspects.

The country around Boston furnished other subjects—riding, picnicing and bathing in summer, and in winter skating and sleighing. Again the elegant note was stressed. The inevitable top hat accompanied the young men on picnics, and the young ladies remained fashionable even when fleeing from snakes. The beau at the seashore, scaring the girls with a lobster, did not abandon his cane. The artist exploited to the full the decorative possibilities of hoopskirts blown by the breeze or agitated by some pretty accident, and there was always a discreetly revealed ankle. At least one handsome couple was usually shown tête-à-tête. But the prevailing tone was less of sentiment than of innocent gaiety, with crowds of children giving the outings a family air.

Soon he branched out into homelier scenes of New England farm life—harvest-time, Thanksgiving and Christmas celebrations, rustic dances, family gatherings with much cider-drinking before huge open fires. In the corn-husking festival a lucky swain uncovers a red ear and claims his prize of a kiss; in the apple bee a girl throws a paring over her shoulder to see if it will form her lover's initials. These pictures captured the authentic flavor of American country life as only a few of our illustrators had done.

American illustration was still strongly influenced by the English school, even more than our painting. *Punch* and the *London Illustrated News* served as models for our magazines. In the absence of international copyright even *Harper's Weekly* had no compunction about pirating their pictures, simply re-engraving them, so that Leech, Keene, Du Maurier and Tenniel were as familiar here as our own Darley. Having been brought up on this generic Anglo-American style, Homer's first illustrations were little different from any other artist's and without his signature would be hard to pick out. But soon he began to develop a style at once more personal and more native, and

his drawings stood out from all others in the magazines. Their observation was fresher, their draftsmanship abler. Crudities there might be, but never softness or vagueness; everything was precise. The line was bold and incisive, its vitality surviving even the deadening process of engraving. From the first there was a sense of movement, and an energy that made other illustrators seem tame. Already noticeable was an attempt to picture light as it exists in nature instead of the conventionalized lighting of the older men. Strong contrasts of black and white made his work more dramatic than the dreary grayness of most wood-engravings. Within two years of his beginnings no other illustrator on the two magazines approached him in skill or originality.

He began to travel outside of Boston for subjects; to Newport to draw the bathing, to West Point for a cadet "hop." For *Ballou's* he made a trip to Cape Cod to cover an old-fashioned camp meeting. One picture shows himself standing, short, slender, dapper, outside a tent filled with weeping, ranting sinners, coolly sketching them.

In the fall of 1859, halfway through his twenty-fourth year, he left Boston to seek his fortune in New York, now the art and publishing center of the country. *Ballou's* was about to give up illustrations, due to the competition of *Harper's* and other New York rivals, leaving Boston without an illustrated paper. "We recall with satisfaction," wrote Mr. Ballou in his valedictory, "the fact that we have never printed a vulgarism, or outraged sensibility by introducing low caricatures, or an indelicate allusion."

In leaving Boston Homer did not break his ties with his birthplace; he visited it frequently and for years spent part of each summer with his parents. New England, the land of his childhood, was the land to which he most loved to return; and in later life he was to return to it for good. New York was the field where he won his first triumphs, but at bottom he was always an alien there, and New England remained his mind's home.

II

THE CIVIL WAR

On his arrival in New York Homer took lodgings in the boardinghouse of Mrs. Alexander Cushman, at what is now 128 East Sixteenth Street, and rented a studio in Nassau Street. Among his fellow boarders were several who became his close friends—Charles H. Voorhees, Alfred C. Howland, the painter, and his brother Henry, later Judge Howland. A group photograph of the time shows six serious young men, Homer with muttonchop whiskers and long hair in the style of the period. When Alfred Howland sailed for France in June 1860, his diary told how these friends including Homer "went down the bay with me. . . . The band plays stirring pieces, and as we cross the bar, the fellows gather round me on the deck, . . . and each presents me with a Yankee Doodle one cent, marked, so that I may be able to remember the giver. How I love these fellows! If they were only going with me, life would seem a perfect bliss."

The Harpers made him a generous offer to enter their employ as a staff artist. "I declined it," Homer later told Sheldon, "because I had had a taste of freedom. The slavery at Bufford's was too fresh in my recollection to let me care to bind myself again. From the time that I took my nose off that lithographic stone, I have had no master; and never shall have any." But he continued to work for the magazine as a free lance. The double-page Christmas drawing for 1859 was his, and in it for the first time we recognize New York scenes—the elegant brownstone mansions of lower Fifth Avenue contrasted with the Irish squatters and goats of Fifty-ninth Street. Other pictures of the city in winter followed, notably the delightful *Skating on the Ladies' Skating-Pond in the Central Park, New York.* The text explained that the lakes were divided into the Ladies' Pond and the Gentlemen's Pond; in the former "no gentlemen are allowed to skate unless they are accompanied by ladies." Looking at this swirl of fashion we marvel at the fortitude of our ancestors, who added to the natural difficulty of skating that of doing it in hoopskirts, top hats and canes. The same theme was used in his first picture shown at the National Academy, in the spring of 1860—probably the engag-

ing watercolor now owned by the St. Louis Museum, which was published the following year as a lithograph by Bufford. He also began to copy portraits from photographs for *Harper's* as he had for *Ballou's*, signing them simply "H", evidently not being proud of this hack work.

About the time of his coming to New York, according to Sheldon, he "attended a drawing-school in Brooklyn." This, his first recorded art school experience, did not occur until he was at least twenty-three. Also about 1861 "he attended the night-school of the Academy of Design, then in Thirteenth Street, under Professor Cummings's tuition." How long he worked there or what courses he took we do not know. American art schools of this time were miserably inadequate, and though the Academy was one of the two best in the country, it had little more to offer than the privilege of copying its collection of casts. After a student had spent a long time at this dreary occupation he might be admitted to the life class, in which only the most advanced pupils were allowed. Whether Homer persisted long enough is unknown. Not a scrap of his student work has survived, and in all his existing production there is no study of a nude, except one sketch probably made much later and not from a model. Even if he did reach the life class he would only have drawn, for painting was not taught at the Academy until more than ten years later.

He visited the few art galleries there were in New York at the time. "What I remember best," he told Sheldon, "is the smell of paint; I used to love it in a picture-gallery." At the old Düsseldorf Gallery he saw William Page's much-discussed and much-condemned *Venus Rising from the Sea* and was deeply enough impressed to remember it almost twenty years later in talking to Sheldon. The Titianesque color of Page, just returned to America from a decade of Rome, must have been a revelation to a young artist who could have seen little great painting.

As time passed he became acquainted with more of his fellow artists, and in 1861, after two years of living in the boardinghouse and working in his Nassau Street studio, he moved to the New York University Building on Washington Square, where several artists, including Eastman Johnson, had studios. Here he was to stay for over ten years. "We shall never be able to understand," wrote Thomas Bailey Aldrich in an article on Homer in 1866,

"why eight or ten of these pleasant fellows have located themselves in the New York University. There isn't a more gloomy structure outside of one of Mrs. Radcliffe's romances; and we hold that few men could pass a week in those lugubrious chambers without adding a morbid streak to their natures, —the present genial inmates to the contrary notwithstanding. . . .

"It has taken us some time to reach Mr. Homer's *atelier*, for it is on the third or fourth floor. But the half-finished picture on his easel, the two or three crayon sketches on the walls, (military subjects), and the splendid view from his one window, cause us to forget that last long flight of stairs.

"The studio itself does not demand particular notice. It is remarkable for nothing but its contracted dimensions: it seems altogether too small for a man to have a large idea in. If Mr. Homer were to paint a big battle-piece, he would be in as awkward a predicament as was the amiable Dr. Primrose, when he had the portraits of all his family painted on one canvas. 'The picture,' says the good old Vicar of Wakefield, 'instead of gratifying our vanity, as we hoped, leaned, in a mortifying manner, against the kitchen-wall, where the canvas was stretched and painted, much too large to be got through any of the doors.' "

Homer's studio was in the tower room, at the top of a long flight of steep stairs like a stepladder. "This place just suited his taste," said Downes. A door opened out onto a flat roof, which he later found useful for painting, posing his models to get the effect of sunlight on the figures. His brother Charles described to Downes a night scene in this studio: a dozen artists and friends are in the room; Homer, busy on a drawing for *Harper's* that had to be done by midnight, sitting on the model-stand working away in the midst of a hubbub of talk and storytelling, shouts, "Here, one of you chaps, fill my pipe for me! I'm too busy to stop."

II

Up to this time his illustrations had had nothing to do with public affairs. But this was to be changed by the momentous events of 1861. When Lincoln passed through New York on his way to be inaugurated Homer drew him addressing the people from the balcony of the Astor House. Commissioned

by *Harper's* to cover the inauguration, he went to Washington and did a two-page drawing of the new president making his inaugural speech before the huge crowd in front of the Capitol.

When the war broke out there was a great demand for news pictures. *Harper's* sent out several special artists, one to each army. These men lived soldiers' lives, constantly with the troops, covering every battle, and sending back drawings to the magazine each week, often with written accounts. As *Harper's* said at the end of the war: "They have made the weary marches and dangerous voyages. They have shared the soldier's fare; they have ridden and waded, and climbed and floundered. . . . The pictorial history of the war which they have written with their pencils in the field, upon their knees, upon a knapsack, upon a bulwark, upon a drum-head, upon a block, upon a canteen, upon a wet deck, in the gray dawn, in the dusk twilight, with freezing or fevered fingers . . . —this is a history quivering with life, faithful, terrible, romantic."

A war artist of this kind Homer was for only a brief period. He made several trips to the front and saw some fighting, but he was not stationed permanently with the armies. Most of his war drawings were done back in New York and were of general phases of army life rather than specific events. This was due not to any lack of talent for reportorial drawing, but doubtless to his independence, his aversion to being tied down to a steady job, and his ambition to be something more than an illustrator.

The first six months of the war he seems to have spent in New York, and in the summer, as usual, at his parents' new home in Belmont outside Boston. While the regular military artists were wading through Virginia mud, he was drawing his pretty Belmont cousins and their friends making havelocks for the soldiers. What was probably his first visit to the front was made in October 1861 as a special artist for *Harper's*, detailed to the Army of the Potomac. At this time all was very quiet along the Potomac. Since its humiliating defeat at Bull Run a few months before, the army had remained in camp outside Washington, undergoing a rigorous reorganization under McClellan. Homer could have seen no fighting on this visit, which lasted no more than a few weeks at the most, but he secured enough sketches to do several illustrations after his return to New York.

His war illustrations, at this time and later, seldom pictured actual fighting. They were mostly of the everyday life in camp that made up nine-tenths of a soldier's existence, with its primitiveness, rough humor and simple recreations—soldiers gathered around a bivouac fire at night, watching a negro dance while another plays a banjo, the dramatic lights and shadows contrasting with the remote glow of the moon; the interior of a hut lit by a roaring fire, men sleeping on the floor, a few restless souls playing cards and quarrelling; soldiers on payday descending on a sutler's tent and gorging themselves on pie, salt herring and cider, or at Christmas opening boxes from adoring families, falling on the food and socks, tossing the tracts aside. Here were authentic types of a democratic army—gaunt Yankees looking like Uncle Sam, bulldog Irishmen from New York, swaggering Zouaves with curling moustaches and imperials—hard specimens all, drawn with humor and keen characterization, and contrasting with the waxwork heroes pictured by other illustrators. Drinking, fighting, gambling and crude horseplay were not soft-pedalled, but on the whole the picture he drew of military life was jovial rather than sardonic.

Occasionally he did large designs of a more general inspirational character —*Songs of the War, Our Women and the War*—many little scenes tied together by appropriate decorative motifs. Intended to appeal to patriotism, these were essentially cartoons. As such they were not entirely successful, for while Homer was wholeheartedly for the Union cause he was too objective and drily humorous to make a good propagandist. It remained for Thomas Nast to do the same thing for *Harper's* much more effectively and to earn Lincoln's comment, "Nast has been our best recruiting sergeant."

In the spring of 1862 he made another trip to the front and this time saw more action. The long-awaited offensive against Richmond was about to be launched. McClellan's Army of the Potomac, the most formidable military force this country had ever seen, was being transported by water to the York Peninsula for an advance on the Confederate capital. Homer was in Washington April 1st, saw and drew the troops embarking at Alexandria, and accompanied them on a transport to the Peninsula. Here the army, under McClellan's overcautious command, was wasting a precious month besieging Yorktown. Homer was with the troops throughout the siege, his pencil con-

stantly busy, making scores of sketches of soldiers reconnoitering, skirmishing, drilling, loafing under the hot Virginia sun or beneath rude pine-bough shelters. He remained until after the Confederate evacuation of the town on May 3rd; but he probably did not follow the troops in their advance up the Peninsula, for there were no illustrations by him of this offensive phase of the campaign, which brought them to within a few miles of Richmond, so close that they could hear its church bells—closer than any Union force was to get for two long years. Nor were there any drawings to indicate that he saw the bloody Seven Days' Battles that ended in McClellan's withdrawal and the failure of the campaign. Judging by his work in *Harper's* he was probably back in New York not later than June 1st, with a portfolio of sketches that were to furnish him with material for some time to come.

This was the only time we know of that he acted as a "special artist" at the front in the usual sense—one who covered specific events and sent his drawings on paper back to the magazine to be redrawn by staff artists, instead of doing them on the block himself in New York. The result could not have pleased him; how much character was lost in the process, is shown by a double-page spread from sketches by himself and *Harper's* regular artist, in which it is impossible to distinguish between them. And the illustrations were small. He was probably thinking of this when years later he complained to his friend John W. Beatty that he had expected twenty-five dollars for each sketch on paper from the front, only to find that the magazine reduced them and put four on a page, paying him twenty-five dollars for the lot. Altogether the experience could not have encouraged him to continue as a "special artist."

It was after his return to New York that he did the best of his few battle scenes—*A Cavalry Charge* and *A Bayonet Charge*. The usual battle picture was a descriptive panorama, showing the terrain and the disposition of forces; the soldiers were handsome and heroic and quite correct in their uniforms, and although there had to be a few shells bursting and men falling, the whole affair seemed rather academic. But Homer's two battle pieces take us right into the thick of things; we are there in the front line, meeting the trampling horses, the sabre slash, the bayonet thrust. No other drawings in the magazine had approached these in their vivid sensation of the violence of battle. They

show that if Homer had wanted to he could have been the most effective military illustrator of the time. *Harper's* did not exaggerate when it called *A Bayonet Charge* "one of the most spirited pictures ever published in this country."

Homer's subsequent war record becomes harder to follow. After the Peninsular Campaign he never illustrated specific events, and his military subjects became fewer and fewer; there were none at all during the summer of 1863, which witnessed Gettysburg and some of the most critical days for the Union. But he evidently visited the front again, probably several times. Pictures of camp life in winter appeared in 1863 and 1864. His painting, *A Skirmish in the Wilderness,* was based on sketches made on the battlefield during Grant's battering-ram advance through the Virginia forests in the spring of 1864. Another oil, *Defiance,* proves that he saw something of the siege of Petersburg in 1864, when the fighting had taken on the character of modern trench warfare. Other works indicate that he was present during the momentous spring days of 1865 when Lee's exhausted army finally abandoned Petersburg and began the retreat that ended in Appomattox. A quaint little drawing shows Lincoln and his son Tad waiting with Grant at the railroad station in City Point, probably at the beginning of that long chase.

But by this time Homer had ceased to be a reportorial artist. In fact, for several years he did less and less work of any kind for *Harper's*, going from eight illustrations in 1863 to four in 1864, three in 1865 and none in 1866. This could not have been from lack of opportunity, for *Harper's* showed by the space they gave him and their editorial comments that they thought highly of him. He had found a new and more engrossing medium—painting.

III

Except for one juvenile effort, we know of no oils by Homer before late 1862, when he was almost twenty-seven. Of his training in oil Sheldon said: "In 1861 he determined to paint. For a month, in the old Dodworth Building near Grace Church, he took lessons in painting of Rondel, an artist from Boston, who once a week, on Saturdays, taught him how to handle his brush, set his palette, etc. The next summer he bought a tin box containing brushes,

colors, oils, and various equipments and started out into the country to paint from Nature."

This Frédéric Rondel was a genre and landscape painter of French birth and training, with a modest reputation which secured his election as an Associate of the National Academy this same year. His work was in the sentimental style of the time, but with a certain honesty and fresh observation that may have attracted Homer. The influence he could have exerted in four or five lessons, however, could not have been great. It is amusing to note that a recent French critic, bolstering his thesis that all good American painting stems from France, claims that "même le plus réfractaire, le *yankee* des *yankees*, Winslow Homer, a appris son art à New York d'un obscur Frédéric Rondel."

Thus the extent of Homer's art education, as far as we know, was two years in a lithographic shop, some study at a Brooklyn drawing-school and the National Academy, and four or five lessons from a second-rate artist in the most elementary procedure of painting. Everything else he learned for himself. Most of his training he got by the actual practice of his profession. Certainly if any artist deserves to be called self-taught, it was he. Not that this was an advantage—indeed, this meagre instruction showed in his oil technique to the end of his life. But it is doubtful whether in the America of his time he could have found any better training.

"His very first picture in oils," wrote his friend Russell Shurtleff, the landscape painter, "was painted in his studio in the old University Building in Washington Square. It represented a 'Sharpshooter' seated in a brig top, aiming at a distant 'Reb,' a canvas about 16 by 20. I sat with him many days while he worked on it, and remember discussing with him how much he could ask for it. He decided not less than sixty dollars, as that was what Harper paid him for a full page drawing on the wood." This picture he copied on the block for *Harper's*, who published it November 15th, 1862. About the same time he did another oil (pl. 4), of a soldier being punished for intoxication by being forced to stand on a barrel with a log of wood over his shoulder—a work of which he said in later years, "It is about as beautiful and interesting as the button on a barn door." These two pictures he placed in an exhibition. On his return from the front *Harper's* had made him another tempting offer

of a steady job, and he wrote his brother Charles that if the two pictures were not sold he would give up painting and accept the offer. Charles was beginning a promising career as chemist for the Pacific Cotton Mills at Lawrence, Massachusetts. Out of his small salary he bought both paintings, cautioning the dealer not to give the name of the purchaser. Several years later when Winslow visited him and saw one of the pictures, he swore roundly and refused to speak to his brother for weeks.

With this encouragement he continued painting. The spring exhibition of the National Academy in 1863 included two canvases, both based on scenes of the Peninsular Campaign—*Home, Sweet Home* (pl. 4), two of McClellan's soldiers listening with obvious homesickness to the regimental band, and *The Last Goose at Yorktown,* a pair of warriors sneaking up on a prospective delicacy. George William Curtis, reviewing the show in *Harper's,* wrote: "*Home, Sweet Home* was marked 'for sale' in the catalogue on the first day. But on the second it was labeled 'sold.' It is a little work of real feeling. . . . There is no strained effect in it, no sentimentality, but a hearty, homely actuality." *The Last Goose* also soon found a purchaser, both sales being legitimate this time; and Homer had reason to feel satisfied with both the financial and critical reception of his first paintings.

His earliest oils were all war scenes. Like his illustrations, they shunned the heroic or spectacular. Of his twenty-odd war paintings only four or five had to do with fighting and only one, *A Skirmish in the Wilderness,* could be called a real battle scene, and this was far from a conventional one—a wood interior with a few soldiers firing from behind trees or lying wounded; one has to study it for some time before one realizes that it is not just a forest scene but a realistic record of a blind struggle in the woods. Usually they pictured the everyday aspects of army life. Humor was always present, though less obvious than in his illustrations. His soldiers were ordinary enough fellows, fond of sport and horseplay, always hungry and thirsty, continually in trouble. They displayed little martial spirit, and the artist took a sly delight in showing the human being triumphing over the soldier—a boy "playing old soldier," pretending to be sick; an officer hungrily watching a private gorge himself at the sutler's tent; a young daredevil showing off by standing on the earthworks inviting the rebels to shoot him. These

were not military subjects in the usual sense, but genre pictures of military life. But with all his avoidance of the tragic aspects of war, no other artist left so authentic a record of how the Civil War soldier looked and acted.

The only touch of military swagger was supplied by the Zouaves, those unfortunate militiamen who were sent to the front in the scarlet, blue and gold uniforms they had worn in Fourth of July parades back home, perfect targets for both bullets and ridicule. Their brilliant picturesqueness attracted and amused Homer and he used them in several works. But he was equally interested in the humblest members of the army—the men of the baggage trains, who did nothing more glamorous than feed and supply the troops. This side of war, in which it resembled a huge camping trip, appealed especially to him. The negro wagoners and servants attracted him particularly, and in *The Bright Side* and *Army Teamsters* he showed them taking their ease on the sunny side of a tent, and in *Army Boots,* loafing and laughing over a game of cards. Although his attitude reflected some of the typical Northern idea that the negro was primarily a humorous object, his sense of colored character and physiognomy was already more realistic than the average artist's minstrel-show conception.

Most of his war pictures were done in New York from drawings made at the front, some of which bear color notes, proving that he was thinking as much of painting as of illustration when he made them. Often he painted in the sunlight on the roof of the studio building, using a lay figure dressed impartially in Union blue or Confederate gray. Most of them were small in scale and simple in composition, with few figures and little attempt at strong action. Rarely did he venture on scenes as crowded or dramatic as his large drawings on the woodblock, evidently not yet having the self-confidence as a painter that he had as a black-and-white artist. Naturally these early canvases were unsophisticated and somewhat crude, but from the first they revealed an artist who saw things with his own eyes. They were pieces of direct, simple naturalism, showing no trace of any other artist's style. Character and attitudes were keenly and truthfully observed, with nothing stereotyped. Sunlight and outdoor color were seen with a fresh eye, uninfluenced by studio formulas. And for a self-taught painter who had been handling oil for so brief a time, their technical competence was remarkable.

The most ambitious of them, *Pitching Quoits* (pl. 5), with its photographic realism, uncompromising clarity and hard, bright local color, was a noteworthy naturalistic achievement, however innocent of artistic quality.

His paintings were received favorably by the public from the start. From 1863 on he was represented in almost every exhibition of the National Academy for many years, and in 1864 he was elected an Associate and the following year, when he was only twenty-nine, a full-fledged Academician, one of the youngest ever to attain this honor. Inness, eleven years older, did not become an Academician until 1868, La Farge until 1869, Martin until 1874, while Eakins and Ryder were not even admitted as Associates until 1902. For his diploma picture Homer gave the Academy a little oil of a girl playing croquet, writing on the back, "Winslow Homer would like to have the privilege of painting a better picture"; but he never got around to doing it.

Not until the war was over did he finish his most famous war picture, *Prisoners from the Front* (pl. 5), showing a young Union officer looking over a batch of ragged Confederate captives. Larger than most of his war subjects (though not a big canvas) and with more figures, it was also the most effective dramatically. The contrast between the confident, well-groomed Northern officer and his shabby, defiant Southern counterpart, the pitiable state of the other prisoners, the fine delineation of character in the bedraggled old man, the freedom from false heroics or vindictiveness, made this a moving symbol of victory tempered with sympathy for the vanquished. In conception and execution it was his most mature work up to that time. At the Academy exhibition in the spring of 1866 it created a sensation and made its author famous overnight. The American public was curious to see authentic records of the late war, but little had so far been produced by our painters and nothing approaching this in ability. As Henry T. Tuckerman wrote the following year, the picture "attracted more attention, and, with the exception of some inadequacy in color, won more praise than any *genre* picture by a native hand that has appeared of late years." Clarence Cook said later: "No picture has been painted in America in our day that made so deep an appeal to the feelings of the people. . . . Though painted in the heat of the war, and when the bitterest feelings were aroused on both sides, the influence of this picture was strong on the side of brotherly feeling." Soon after the

exhibition it was bought by one of the leading collectors in New York, John Taylor Johnston, later the first president of the Metropolitan Museum.

Certainly Homer had no cause to complain about his debut as a painter. From the very first his pictures had been admitted to the chief exhibitions, praised by critics, bought by collectors, and had won him election to the most respected artists' organization in the country.

III

HOMER IN HIS THIRTIES

The American art world at the close of the Civil War was small and provincial. Foreign travel had been almost cut off; little European art was yet imported. There was nothing like the flood of art books, magazines and reproductions that we have today. New York, the art center of the country, had no museum until 1871, when the Metropolitan opened with a strange assortment of borrowed objects. Except for the annual shows of the National Academy, pictures could be seen only in a few dealers' stores. Well might one critic complain of "the forlorn absence of public galleries and collections, which confers upon New York a disreputable eminence among cities of either hemisphere."

Artistic affairs were controlled by the older Academicians, veterans of the Hudson River school and the palmy days of portrait painting. Their creed was the simple one of copying nature literally, down to the last detail. "He believes in Nature," a critic wrote of one of them, "and is not ashamed laboriously to imitate her. An artist like Corot offends him by slovenliness." To these die-hards the Barbizon school was still radical. The few artists who were alive to what had been going on in France, such as Inness and Hunt, were voices crying in the wilderness. The most admired living Frenchmen were not, as one might suppose, Ingres, Corot, Millet, Courbet, Manet, Degas, but Gérôme, Meissonier, Bouguereau, Cabanel. To read the art magazines of the time one would hardly know that there was any French art outside of the Salon.

The most popular native painters were grandiose landscapists like Bierstadt, Church and Moran, who pictured the natural marvels of the Western Hemisphere—the Rocky Mountains, Niagara Falls, the volcanoes of Mexico and the icebergs of Labrador. Their huge panoramas, in which one could see every spectacular feature for miles and at the same time count every leaf, were the works that held the center of the exhibitions, received the critics' highest praise and were bought for fantastic prices by the new millionaires, to be hung on the red damask walls of their big new houses on lower Fifth

Avenue. Public taste ran also to storytelling pictures featuring dogs, cats and children; costume pieces from history or novels; picturesque scenes from foreign lands—anything remote in time or place from the actualities of American life.

II

We are apt to think of Winslow Homer as always the crusty hermit of his later years. But the young Homer was quite a different person. At thirty, as seen in photographs, he was a good-looking young man, if not conventionally handsome—short, lean, with a big nose, high cheekbones, enormous handle-bar moustaches, dark eyes with a direct, impassive gaze, and a poker face. He carried himself well and was somewhat of a dandy, going in for the loud checks, high collars and bowler hats affected by the beaux of the day. He had many friends and enjoyed society, though neither then nor later was he a conversationalist. In the words of a young lady who used to see him on picnics, "He was a quiet little fellow, but he liked to be in the thick of things."

"He had the usual number of love affairs when he was a young man," said one who knew him well. His work gives ample evidence of admiration for feminine beauty. Appearing one day in the Boston studio of his friend Albion Bicknell, he pulled a handful of ribbons out of his pocket and remarked that he had been shopping. "What do you want of so many ribbons?" asked Bicknell. Homer explained that he had no use for them, but whenever he saw a pretty face behind the counter he would stop and buy a ribbon. From the way he painted women, always young and comely but with an air of innocent wholesomeness, we can conjecture that while susceptible he was no Don Juan.

He had many artist friends, among the closest being John La Farge, Homer Martin, William Page, Eastman Johnson, E. Wood Perry, John F. Weir, Alfred C. Howland, John Fitch, Russell M. Shurtleff and Oliver Lay. La Farge wrote later: "We respected each other too much to care for blame or too much praise. But occasionally when Homer had something quite different he might ask the approval of his 'pals.' For he had them and was singular in their staid admiration and friendship. Homer Martin was one of

these silent admirers. . . . Martin was capable of long stretches of silence and Homer had manners of telling things without words." A painting of Homer's shows himself, Martin and Fitch sketching on a bare mountainside that might be the top of Mount Washington. When Martin was elected to the National Academy, Homer painted his portrait for the institution; and when Homer himself was elected, Lay did his portrait. One of his best friends was John F. Weir, whom he used to visit at West Point. These were all men who were fond of him and of whom he was fond, and who remained his friends for years, until his withdrawal from society in middle age. In this and other respects he was a normal social being.

His studio remained in the New York University Building, except for a short period in 1869-1870 at Clinton Hall on Astor Place, until early 1872, when he moved to the Tenth Street Studios at 51 West Tenth Street, still standing; and here he stayed through the 1870's, "living in a better atmosphere of comradeship but scarcely in more comfort than in his rude tower overlooking Washington Square." Among his fellow tenants were La Farge, Martin, Johnson, J. G. Brown. As early as 1865 he was admitted to the Century Association, to which many artists and writers belonged, and was a member until his death. In 1864 he was elected to the Artists' Fund Society, a benevolent organization of artists who contributed pictures to annual auctions for a fund for widows and children of members; but either he decided that he was not going to have any widow and children, or the three-dollar fine for not attending meetings was too much, for he resigned after three years.

Though Homer lived in New York over twenty years, he remained a country-minded artist. He never painted a New York scene, and seldom even illustrated one after the first few years. In this he was scarcely alone. The city was not to become a common theme for American painters until the turn of the century. New York, like most American cities of the day, was not decorative—a great sprawling town laid out in monotonous rectangles, with filthy streets and horrible slums, its only presentable part the new Central Park. It would have been hard for any artist to find the kind of themes here that Manet and Degas were finding in Paris. To picture the New York of Boss Tweed required the pencil of a satirist, and there was no trace of satire

in Homer. New York was his winter home and his place of business, and here he painted many of his pictures; but his subjects came from the summer months he spent in the country.

With the late spring he would be on the move. His parents had gone from Cambridge further out to Belmont, then noted for its romantic beauty, with the famous Waverley Oaks and the rocky glen and cascades of Beaver Brook. Here many of the Homer clan were already settled, and when he visited his parents as he usually did at least part of the summer, he found a gay society of young cousins. From Belmont came the themes of many of his early pictures. The sight of his pretty cousin Florence Tryon and her friends playing croquet suggested the delightful series of croquet scenes he painted just after the war.

But Homer was not a man to stay in one spot for long. He was a born wanderer, and his summer travels took him over New England, up the Hudson River, and into Pennsylvania and further south. Sometimes to the fashionable summer resorts—the North Shore, the White Mountains, Long Branch; more often he struck out for himself into the real country. From boyhood days he had retained a passion for outdoor life, and in his wanderings he combined painting with fishing, hunting and exploring the countryside.

III

Homer was a naturalist; he painted what he saw. At a time when other American artists were seeking picturesque foreign lands or spectacular native scenery, or ransacking history and literature for themes, he pictured the everyday life of America. Nowadays this contemporaneity is taken for granted, but in the 1860's it was unorthodox, as Manet and Degas were discovering in France.

He had made a reputation as a painter of the war, and public interest being as it was, he might have worked this vein for years. But it was characteristic of him that his most successful military picture, *Prisoners from the Front*, was one of the last. Even before the war ended he was doing peacetime subjects.

Country life became his main theme. There was the fashionable world

of summer resorts and hotels, with women playing the leading roles. This was an age of increasing physical freedom for women, and these girls were no languishing Victorian females but young Amazons, playing croquet, riding, bathing, going on picnics and straw rides—activities ladylike by our standards, but the most strenuous allowed the sex in those days. In his croquet scenes the young ladies in bright contrasting hoopskirts stand out against green grass and foliage like so many gay-plumaged birds. In the White Mountains they ride up the Mount Washington carriage road—sidesaddle, of course—in sunbonnets and billowy white skirts. At Long Branch, summer residence of President Grant, they gather on the bluffs, the sea breeze raising havoc with their flounced skirts and parasols. They appear on the beach in voluminous all-concealing bathing suits, and later emerge sodden and dripping from the water. Bathing in those days was not a thing to be lightly undertaken; as *Every Saturday* said in an article accompanying one of his illustrations: "The question, to bathe or not to bathe in public, will always remain an open one. By taking proper precautions one can be pretty sure of not outraging the proprieties, but of not making himself a ridiculous object,—a spectacle to be derided and howled at,—who can be sure?" Homer felt differently, for even his bedraggled bathing beauties, though painted with absolute veracity, managed to be charming. But to his contemporaries such subjects verged on the risqué; one critic felt that *High Tide* was "perhaps not quite refined."

The girls were all young and attractive in their various ways—the dashing, romantic brunette, the buxom blonde of the strongly Anglo-Saxon type that Homer particularly favored. Seldom do we see an older woman or a plain one. Sometimes, especially in his illustrations, he tended to make them types rather than individuals—the Homer Girl, like the later Gibson Girl—though he never idealized them to the extent that most of his contemporaries did. They were neither icy goddesses nor ethereal visions, but human beings. Without seductiveness or coyness, they had the air of mingled innocence and independence that marked the American girl of the period. There was no overt romance in his pictures (except in some illustrations) and whatever sentiment they contained was extremely reserved. For all his preoccupation with women, a certain detachment was apparent; he pictured them as

supremely decorative creatures rather than as strongly individualized persons. The eye's pleasure in the sight of attractive women stylishly dressed and engaged in pleasant activities, was enough for him, without more intimate emotions.

With his keen eye for fashion, he delighted in the hoopskirts, flounces, puffed sleeves, little round turbans, flying ribbons, and all the feminine absurdities of this unstreamlined day. Where less realistic artists toned down these extremes of fashion, he exploited their decorative possibilities to the full, though with no hint of caricature. In his work one can follow not only changes in style but the subtler differences between the clothes of the Long Branch belle and her simpler country sister. As the *Nation* said when his croquet scenes were first shown in 1866: "As regards costume alone, these pictures ought to be taken care of, that our descendants may see how the incredible female dress of the present day actually did look, when worn by active young women."

Thus Homer was one of the first to paint the American girl, since so favorite a subject for our artists and writers. She has seldom had a more sympathetic and at the same time more honest interpreter. The works in which she figured, with their engaging mixture of naïveté and instinctive elegance, were the most delightful pictorial records of fashionable American country life of the period.

Even more often he pictured a simpler kind of rural life, that of the farm. A haymaker in a sunlit meadow, pausing in the noon heat; a farmer's wife at a kitchen door blowing the dinner horn; a girl giving a young farmhand a drink of water from a tin dipper; a winter morning after a blizzard, boys digging a path through shoulder-high snow—plain, prosaic scenes from everyday country life, with no trace of the idealization of everything rural common among genre painters of the time. The people with their spare, uncouth bodies, their tan and freckles, their straw hats and cotton sunbonnets and cowhide boots, were genuine rustic figures, pictured without either sweetening or caricature, but with the truth that comes from firsthand observation.

The accent, however, was on the pleasant side of things. Occasionally men were shown in the heavy labor of plowing or harvesting, but more often they

were taking their ease, or the womenfolk and children were doing the lighter chores or playing. There was no emphasis on the unending toil, the bent back, the mortgage, the abandoned farm, the forlorn old age, as later in the stories of Mary Wilkins Freeman. Homer was painting old-fashioned American farm life in its golden day, and showing its cheer, sturdy independence and simple enjoyments, not its elements of decay. Mingled with his honest naturalism was a strain of idyllicism, a deep-seated love of life spent close to the earth, regulated by the cycle of the seasons, in which labor was healthy, play natural, and even hardships more enjoyable than the city-dweller's lot. His pictures captured the positive pleasures of the old rural life with an authenticity unmatched by any other artist of the time.

Children played a leading part in these scenes. We see them sitting on the hard benches of a one-room rural school presided over by a pretty teacher with a rose on her desk. Released from school, a row of barefoot boys is racing across a meadow to "snap the whip" and send those at the end of the line tumbling head-over-heels. Sitting on a fallen tree beside a pond they fish for suckers among the lily pads. Or they set out to pick berries on a mountainside, chores all done, the whole world to roam in.

The sentimentality with which most artists of the time pictured children was refreshingly absent. Homer's boys were no little angels but healthy children full of energy and adventurousness. He never condescended to them. He himself was still a boy who had continued into manhood the tastes of his own country boyhood. There was no sickly nostalgia in this; he was not mourning his lost childhood but picturing with gusto the things that made childhood memorable—the child's love of nature, his joy in freedom and adventure. It was life as a boy saw and felt it, painted with a man's grasp of actuality. The world had an early-morning freshness; work was play, a day's fishing a delight, being snowbound pure joy. Not that these feelings were openly expressed, for his method remained objective. But this very matter-of-factness, this concern with things rather than emotions, kept him close to the boy's viewpoint. Rarely has such sympathy with childhood been united with such utter unsentimentality. Yet with all their homely naturalism these works were deeply lyrical. They expressed the grave poetry of childhood with a tenderness all the more moving for being so well concealed.

This self-identification with childhood could also be found in much American literature of the time. As the Gilded Age expanded, our writers were turning back to the simpler world of their youth and re-creating it with an understanding they seldom brought to contemporary life. *Little Women,* appearing in 1868, ushered in a series of remarkable books about children—*Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn,* Aldrich's *Story of a Bad Boy,* Warner's *Being a Boy.* Passages in these books read like Homer's paintings put into words. There was no exact literary equivalent for his art, but it lay somewhere between the humorous idyllicism of Aldrich and Warner and the unvarnished realism of Mark Twain.

Landscape was an important element in almost all his work, but seldom pure landscape; nature was the setting for human activity rather than the chief actor. Departing radically from the cold grandiloquence of the Hudson River School, he showed nature close up, informally. He did not idealize her any more than he did his people. Unkempt Yankee farms with bare wooden houses and barns, rail fences, tumble-down stone walls, orchards of gnarled old apple trees, stony pastures, autumn colors such as only America knew, all under the strong sunlight and clear blue sky of our climate—these homely scenes were painted without any attempt to make them look like the mellower European landscape. Few of our artists had captured so accurately the character of our countryside. A sense of air, sunlight, wind and movement gave his landscapes a freshness rare at the time. They displayed little of the subjective emotion with which Inness invested nature, but beneath their objectivity was a warmth and intimacy that were deeply poetic.

Homer's art, growing out of illustration, was a storytelling one. But it was not literary, like the vast mass of genre pictures that filled the Salons and Academies of that day. It did not borrow themes from novels or history, nor tell sentimental anecdotes, nor moralize—and this in an age when moral sentiments were read into even pure landscape. His subjects did not depend for their meaning on something outside the picture, but were expressed in purely pictorial terms. Nature, physical action, the spectacle of the contemporary world were what attracted him, and ideas or moral values played little part in his work. Almost always there was an undertone of humor—the simple physical humor of boys playing snap-the-whip, children gorging

themselves on stolen watermelons, a little negro struggling with an unruly calf—an innocent humor without satire or malice, seldom the humor of character and never that of sex.

In general this early work of Homer's showed a singularly normal mind. His subjects were drawn from real life and painted naturalistically, and everything about them bore the stamp of utter authenticity; but it was the pleasant, not the tragic side of life that he chose to paint—youth, sturdy men, good-looking women, happy children, nature, outdoor activities. A quiet optimism, typically American, pervaded his outlook; doubtless he would have agreed with William Dean Howells that "the smiling aspects of life are the more American." In all of this he revealed himself as less a drastic realist than a poetic naturalist of a reserved, characteristically New England kind.

IV

From the beginning Homer's work was based on direct study of nature more than on anything he had learned from other art. Close observation of outdoor light and color showed in his very first pictures. Obviously they were done either outdoors or from studies made outdoors. Sheldon said: "Many of his finished works have somewhat of the charm of open-air sketches—were, indeed, painted outdoors in the sunlight, in the immediate presence of Nature," and again: "Almost everything that he has shown to the public as a result of his professional efforts has been drawn directly from Nature. . . . No painter in this country, probably, has a profounder respect for such out-door work."

This was before impressionism, and the Hudson River school and the German-trained figure painters were working in the old-fashioned tight, hard, unatmospheric style, with meticulous detail, emphasis on local color, fixed studio light, carefully rounded halftones and brown shadows. But Homer from the first disregarded these formulas and painted what he saw in nature—direct sunlight falling full on objects, modifying their local colors, merging details into larger masses of light and shade, and unifying the whole picture.The older men were painting by tradition; but he was painting by eye. To him light and its effect on objects were almost as impor-

tant as objects themselves. I say almost, for he never carried this tendency as far as his successors. He would never have accepted Manet's dictum, "The most important person in any picture is the light." For him the object and its physical existence remained paramount. But compared to his elders, his preoccupation with light and naturalistic appearances was revolutionary.

His color was also untraditional. Most American painting of the day still belonged to the dark brown school. Without any recipes for outdoor color, he put down his visual sensations of it, and the results were true and alive. From the beginning his color was fresher and more living than that of almost any American of the time. Shadows, at first warm, became neutral and then cool, though his tonality, of course, remained dark compared to the brilliancy that impressionism was soon to display. The older painters looked on color as primarily a means of imitating nature, but he had the simple sensuous feeling for color itself, the pure pleasure of the eye, that marks the born colorist. He also had an innate sense of harmony. Even in his earliest paintings the color was instinctively selective, achieving its effects with relatively few tones skillfully managed. The harmonies were sober and robust rather than rich, with grays knowingly used to give value to the stronger notes.

In his early years Homer drew constantly. His pencil was always busy, recording what he saw in the world around him, with the result that hundreds of drawings still survive (only part of the original number, for probably at least as many were lost or destroyed). Swift and bold, they show the effortless grasp of construction and action that marks the born draftsman, so different from the painstaking correctness learned in schools. They give little sense of the artist feeling his way; everything is put down firmly and without hesitation. His characteristic breadth is united to a no less characteristic precision. The line is strong and unmodulated, without concern for linear refinement.

From his drawings, and from oil studies done direct from nature, he composed his larger paintings, using individual parts, figures or groups and combining them. *Weaning the Calf,* for example, is made up from three oil studies, a watercolor and a drawing. Comparing the paintings with the studies on which they were based, one sees that he gave more and more thought to composition, getting away from the rather casual arrangement of some of

his early pictures. Whether these more composed works were actually painted outdoors, as Sheldon states, is a question; but at least they were based on outdoor studies. A large portion of his existing drawings and sketches were thus used in paintings. Sometimes he used elements from one picture in another, or did two or more versions of the same theme. He was an economical artist, and little of his work was wasted.

As might be expected of a draftsman turned painter, his style at first was basically linear. Outlines and lines of division between light and shade were sharp. Unsoftened by atmosphere, forms stood out in uncompromising clarity, sometimes with metallic hardness. As he developed he grew more conscious of atmosphere, but his style always retained a draftsman's precision. The brushwork was that of a man who drew with the brush—crisp and energetic. When he had said what he wanted to, he stopped. Instead of the "finish" that endeared his elders to the American public, there was a spontaneity and boldness new in our art.

His technique was as direct as everything else about him. Never having received more than the most elementary instruction in oil, he worked out his own methods. The older artists were still following the old masters' tradition, though in a debased form, building up their pictures with successive paintings, the lights heavy and the shadows thin, and glazes giving transparency and depth. Homer disregarded all these inherited methods and painted directly in opaque pigment without a trace of glazing. The only survival of traditional procedure was that he underpainted his earliest pictures in brown monochrome and kept the lights thick and the darks thin. All of this showed little realization of the rich potentialities of the oil medium. It was a limited technique, dry and hard, without subtlety, without depth or mystery. Some passages were as flat and insensitive as a housepainter's work. By comparison with the older artists, he used paint brutally. But brutality is sometimes necessary when something new is to be said. Though he had thrown away many refinements, he had gained compensating qualities—vigor, freshness, life.

A large simplicity marked his style from the first. Forms were seen in large masses, without unnecessary details. Lights and shadows were similarly massed, almost without halftones; and the same gift for simplification

showed in the selectivity of his color and the breadth of his handling. This bigness of style had appeared in his earliest illustrations and was to continue throughout his life; it was a central trait in his artistic character, setting him apart from the niggling meticulousness of most of his contemporaries.

An instinctive feeling for decorative quality was revealed in his early work. From the beginning he realized, consciously or unconsciously, that lines, shapes and colors have value not only as means of representation but for their intrinsic sensuous qualities. No matter how naturalistic, his paintings always showed some feeling for flat pattern. There was no derivative stylization in this; it did not involve any marked distortion of naturalistic vision, was in fact in complete harmony with that vision. The way in which he saw nature, in large masses, with lights and shadows simplified, linear quality and flatness stressed, color sensuously felt—all this contributed to his decorative sense. It was a quality that appeared in little other American art of the time, but it reminds one curiously of artists as remote as the French impressionists and the Japanese printmakers.

This gift was rather for flat pattern than for design of round forms in deep space. In this respect Homer's early work lacked the depth of Thomas Eakins' similar genre subjects. The latter were based on profound comprehension of form and mathematical exactness of construction, within the naturalistic limits common to both artists. In these deeper plastic qualities Homer's work was comparatively deficient. His form did not have the full measure of substance, weight and inner life that Eakins' did. Its movement was pictorial rather than plastic, achieving at best the quaint arrested motion of *Snap the Whip* (pl. 10). Lacking Eakins' austere absorption in the fundamentals of natural form, Homer's interests were wider but less profound—in the large impression, in action, in light and color and appearances, in decorative values.

In Homer's early work there was much that was crude and wooden and awkward. He had no long tradition on which to draw; he was painting virgin subjects in a style he had created for himself. But his work had a quality as engaging as it was rare in modern art—an innocent eye. Here was no stale borrowed manner, but an eye which saw nature as if it had never been painted before, as freshly as any primitive. This gave his early pictures a special

flavor unlike that of any other painter of the period. In time this youthful naïveté was to disappear, but he always retained the primal freshness of vision that marks the genuinely original artist.

V

We know almost nothing about Homer's artistic tastes. A man of few words, he talked little about art, his own or anyone's else. William J. Bixbee, the marine painter, who knew him in the 1890's, wrote: "He was not much inclined to 'talk shop.' . . . I found him a rather pleasant man to talk with, but he avoided as much as possible talking about himself, or his work, or about pictures." Few of his utterances on art have been recorded, and they are singularly unilluminating as to his tastes. Mostly he spoke about his subjects or purely naturalistic problems. His letters, aside from business-like references to his own paintings, contain hardly a word about art.

His remark, "If a man wants to be an artist, he should never look at pictures," can be put down to youthful bumptiousness, but it did represent something of his attitude all his life. J. Eastman Chase, who knew him well from about 1880 on, wrote: "Homer was less influenced by others and by what others had done than any artist—any man, I may as well say—I have ever known. He was a rare visitor to public galleries and exhibitions. When there his attitude was that of a detached and unprejudiced observer. Names meant little or nothing to him. He looked at any picture for precisely what it might have to say to him—the name of the painter, whether great or small, was of equal indifference. He was not accustomed to speak of a 'Corot' or a 'Turner'; it was the picture, pure and simple, that interested him or did not interest him. His comment was, as you would suppose, fresh, original, penetrating, and free from art jargon." (Downes commented: "Charles S. Homer read the foregoing paragraph aloud to me a few days after the publication of Mr. Chase's article, and remarked that it was very true.") His friend Augustus Stonehouse in an article on him in 1887 laid even greater stress on his imperviousness to outside influences, saying: "The difficulty he has shown in taking impressions of foreign art is almost ludicrous when comparisons are drawn between him and other workmen."

About the only indication of his early tastes was given by John La Farge, who in old age, reviewing his own youthful admirations of the mid-1850's, wrote: "Then came the acquaintance with pictures that were just showing their faces in this country, the French school of 1830. I remember the delight of buying a Diaz and a Troyon and a Barye for a few dollars that I had intended for books instead. The lithographs from these men beginning to be famous in Europe came into our market and affected many of us. Mr. Winslow Homer, whom I did not know until later, was a student of these things and has, like myself, been largely made by them."

Shortly after Homer's death La Farge wrote a letter to the New York *Herald* paying tribute to his old friend. It was written only a few days before his own death, which may explain its lack of clearness, and it leaves the impression that La Farge was recalling his own youth as much as Homer's. He said that "the education of this extraordinary American, who is pure Yankee," had "been developed from the studies of especially the French masters of whom there were only a very few examples in the country as far as painting went. We must recall the fact . . . that this was before the age of the photograph. . . . We had to rely on the engravings, and especially the very wonderful lithographs, which gave us the synopsis of a great deal of European art. On these we fed, and as far as inspiration they answered quite as well as the photographs of to-day. . . .

"In painting I had less to do with Homer, though my advice probably came in at certain moments to direct and encourage some side of his efforts. I was just beginning to study in the direction of the future the question of colored light and the relations of the complementaries. Of course a great deal had been done that way, but not as yet as far as we proposed to carry it. Homer was too great a man to be tied by the knowledges of art. He could use them, but from instinct and from reason he knew that art has something else to do than to carry out principles of study."

Turning to Homer's work itself, its outstanding characteristic from the first was an unusually direct relation to nature, and it is difficult to trace the influence of any particular artists. His illustrations had stemmed from the general Anglo-American graphic convention, but he had soon evolved a style that was quite original. His first work in oil grew out of his illustrations,

in both subject and style. Belonging in the line of naturalistic American genre that had started with Mount, it had certain similarities to Homer's contemporaries Eastman Johnson and J. G. Brown, but this was a matter of parallel growth rather than of influence.

In a general way his art was related to the Barbizon school. Like them he turned his back on the grand style and went direct to nature and everyday life, picturing them naturalistically. Much in his early style parallels that of Corot, Millet, Rousseau and Courbet. It is true that there were essential differences. The Frenchmen had a background of romanticism or classicism that permeated their naturalism, even when like Courbet they reacted most violently against it; whereas Homer's naturalism was simple and pure. Corot's classicism, Millet's religiousness, the romantic survivals in Courbet, were foreign to Homer, just as his Yankee humor and reportorial sense were alien to the Barbizon spirit. To the more purely naturalistic of the school, Rousseau, Daubigny, Troyon, and Corot in his realistic moods, his affinities were closer, and these men were probably the objects of the youthful admiration that La Farge mentions. But the likenesses were of the most generalized kind, and it is impossible to isolate the marks of any individual artists. Certainly there was nothing like the impress of Millet on Hunt, Courbet on Whistler, Delacroix on La Farge, or Corot on Inness—direct, unmistakable influences, confirmed by what we know of the artists' lives. By comparison the Barbizon influence on Homer seems quite general, part of the whole spirit of the time. When La Farge said that he was "largely made by" the school he must have been transferring his own impressionability to Homer.

Naturally influences played their part in his style, for no artist however self-sufficient is immune to them. Our vision of reality is always conditioned by the way that art, especially that of our own time, has taught us to see. How much this affects an artist depends on the individual. With Homer independence was far more marked than impressionability. In this respect he was one of the most genuinely original artists of his time. Not that independence was altogether a virtue—in some ways it was a distinct limitation. Had he been more sophisticated he might have avoided the errors of untutored naturalism.

Rather than a follower of the Barbizon school, Homer can be considered

an impressionist, using that word in its broadest sense, to cover those artists who in the 1860's broke away from traditional subjects and painted the life around them, relying on their own eyes instead of on accepted ways of seeing, and concentrating on the color and light of outdoors. His early work showed many curious parallels to the early work of the French impressionists, especially Claude Monet, and to their precursor, Eugène Boudin. Similar were the amoral naturalism, the preference for the gay and pleasant, the preoccupation with sunlight and outdoor color, the decorative sense, the summary handling, the opaque technique, and even minor mannerisms. Naturally there were many differences—Homer's extremely American sentiment and humor, his feeling for childhood, his love of wild nature, and his rusticity, closer to Millet and Corot than to their urban successors. The impressionists were sophisticated artists, heirs to a long tradition, even though they chose to break with it; in comparison Homer seemed homespun. But still he was a representative, if a provincial one, of the same movement.

None of these parallels could have been a result of influence, for they showed in his work from the first, before he had been abroad, and indeed before impressionism had been born, even in France. His impressionism was an independent manifestation of a new viewpoint that was appearing everywhere—in Italy, for example, with Giovanni Fattori. Not until twenty years later was the French movement to reach America with our first orthodox impressionists, Robinson, Twachtman, Weir and Hassam.

The distinction of being our pioneer impressionist Homer shared with La Farge. More precocious intellectually, La Farge in the early 1860's was studying light and color and optics, and importing Japanese prints and analyzing them from the standpoint of color relations in landscape. The fruit of these researches, *Paradise Valley*, painted in 1867, was one of the earliest impressionist landscapes in this country, of which La Farge later said: "I undertook a combination of a large variety of problems which were not in the line of my fellow artists here, nor did I know of any one in Europe who at that time undertook them." It is possible that Homer's interest in outdoor light and color, though certainly not due to La Farge, for it had showed in his work from the first, may have been stimulated by his friend. And La Farge may have introduced him to Japanese art. On the other hand,

the Japanese parallels in his work seem less a result of conscious imitation, as with La Farge, Whistler and Degas, than of an underlying affinity between his vision of nature and that of the Oriental printmakers.

VI

As he was approaching thirty-one, in late 1866, Homer made his first trip abroad, to France. Beforehand, on November 17th, he and Eugene Benson, who was also about to leave, held a sale at Leeds & Miner's gallery in New York, doubtless to raise funds. Homer contributed nineteen pictures. The great Universal Exposition was being held in Paris, and *Prisoners from the Front* and *The Bright Side* were included in the small American section—one of the first occasions that a group of American art had been seen in Europe. In the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* Paul Mantz wrote of Homer's work: "This is firm, precise painting, in the manner of Gérôme, but with less dryness," while the London *Art Journal* said: "These works are real; the artist paints what he has seen and known." Four members of the international jury of awards voted to give him a medal, but their votes being insufficient, the prize went to Frederic E. Church.

He spent about ten months in France, dividing his time between Paris and the country. Sixteen French paintings have been found, mostly small and sketchy, six done in Paris, the other ten in the country, including several in Picardy. As in America, farm life attracted him, especially peasant men and women working in the fields—the kind of theme that Millet had made classic. A few years later Alden Weir saw in a small inn at Cernay-la-Ville near Paris, formerly frequented by Courbet and Daubigny and other artists who left pictures in lieu of cash, a haymaking scene by Homer painted on a door-panel.

He attended no art classes, as far as we know. He must have visited the Louvre, for an illustration in *Harper's* shows the Long Gallery crowded with students copying the old masters; but he himself does not seem to have joined them, and how much he looked at the great paintings and what he thought of them are unknown. "I do not know what more he got beyond what he had already," wrote La Farge. "He seems to have dealt little with

the French artists . . . nor have I ever heard what he thought or said of the great masters' work. He might have been as silent upon that subject as on most."

Where he spent at least part of his time is shown by two *Harper's* illustrations of Paris dance halls. At the Mabille the can-can is being danced, the men in top hats, the girls kicking high; at the Casino the crowd surrounds a waltzer who is whirling his partner off her feet. This was strong meat for an American family journal, and *Harper's* felt it necessary to append a long censorious article, ending piously: "We shall not venture to look into the abyss on the brink of which these frenzied men and women are dancing, and this too curious crowd of spectators is treading. This is work for the severe and steady eye of the preacher and moralist."

Part of the time he had a studio in Montmartre, shared with a friend from Belmont, Albert Warren Kelsey, who later remembered the artist as a gay, genial young man who thoroughly enjoyed the life of Paris. A souvenir of this friendship is a photograph of the two, inscribed by Kelsey "Damon and Pythias."

On August 26th we find Homer writing his friend Charles Voorhees back in New York: "Perhaps you remember the picture of mine 'Waverley Oaks.' I lent it to Henry Howland. If you are inclined you can do me a great favor without incurring any loss by sending me $100 for it. Including the frame for which I gave 55. If my request bores you in the least, take no notice of it. I am working hard and have improved much, and when I come home can make money, but I wish if possible to stay here a little longer." Voorhees evidently cooperated, for he later owned the picture. But when Homer left Paris, probably in October 1867, he was so broke that Kelsey paid his fare home, for which Homer later gave him his choice of any one of his paintings.

The influence of this trip on his art was not great. The work he did in France was much like what had gone before. Rather tentative, as if he was less sure of himself than back home, it was a little higher in key and more painterlike. Traces of any other artist's style are hard to discover; if anything, one feels that he might have been looking at the men of 1830. But such differences were slight, and what strikes one most is how little he changed abroad. As Augustus Stonehouse wrote: "When he travelled in

Europe, it was supposed that the sight of the perfection of technical processes reached by foreign artists would improve his own workmanship. But here that obtuseness so unlike the alarming precocity of some American youths showed itself once more. He looked, he saw, doubtless he understood. But the character native to the man was too much for him. Shall we say that it was a pity? No; for it is just this slowness to take suggestions that has made Mr. Homer, with all his limitations, the refreshing, the original artist he is."

At this time the impressionist movement had barely started. Manet, four years older than Homer, had been shocking the public for several years, and during the Exposition he and Courbet staged an independent show outside the fair grounds that included fifty Manets. His *plein air* phase, however, had not yet begun. The other future impressionists, most of them younger than Homer and just out of art school, were still an obscure group of eccentrics. Monet was painting his charming early works, so curiously parallel to Homer's. But there was little chance to see the younger men's work, for it was consistently refused by the Salon and there was no other place to exhibit. The group's first exhibition was still seven years in the future, as was the name "impressionist." Homer might have seen the Manet-Courbet show, but it is highly improbable that he could have seen the younger men.

His paintings for two or three years after his return, such as *Mount Washington, The Bridle Path* (pl. 8), *Long Branch* (pl. 9) and *High Tide* (pl. 8), had a gayer and more fashionable note that may have reflected his French experience. They showed an increased awareness of sunlight and atmosphere, and were lighter and cooler than anything he had done before, or in fact was to do for some time, for he soon reverted to a darker key. They had certain likenesses to Manet, though not much more than his previous work, and nothing as strong as imitation. Curiously enough, they were more like the Manet of a few years later than anything Homer could have seen in Paris; another indication that his impressionism was a matter of parallel development rather than influence. But compared to American painting of the time, even academic French art was high-keyed. To a young man used to Hudson River landscapes, even Gérôme and Meissonier must have seemed brilliant.

These tendencies in his style were probably due to the impact of the French school as a whole more than of any individual painter. In any case, there was no fundamental change, and the new phase was a natural development of his former preoccupation with outdoor light, doubtless stimulated by what he had seen abroad. Certainly France left no such strong impress on him as on his younger and more suggestible fellow countrymen who were soon to begin flocking to Paris.

VII

Towards the end of the Civil War Homer had almost given up illustration. But after his return from France he began contributing again to *Harper's Weekly*, probably to recoup his finances. In the next few years, from 1868 to 1874, he was busier than ever illustrating, not only for *Harper's* but for the *Galaxy*, *Our Young Folks*, *Appleton's Journal*, *Hearth and Home* and others. When the Boston firm of Fields, Osgood & Company in 1870 changed their staid *Every Saturday* into a picture magazine along the lines of the New York ones, Homer deserted *Harper's* and published all his work in the new venture, not returning to the *Weekly* until Boston had once more proved that it would not support an illustrated journal. In these years he also illustrated a number of books, especially gift-book editions of the New England poets—Whittier, Longfellow, Lowell, Lucy Larcom—and of Bryant and Tennyson. Being known as a specialist in childhood subjects, he was called upon for several children's books.

His favorite theme as in painting was country life, with more emphasis on pretty girls and fashion. As the years passed his work became less and less illustration in the usual meaning of the word. Occasionally he might illustrate a story, novel or poem, but he no longer did reportorial pictures of current events or persons. Nor did he do much humorous work. Though there was always an element of quiet humor, he had little gift for satire or caricature, and his rare attempts to be funny were usually dismal failures. His few obviously commissioned drawings, including some New York scenes, fell equally flat. He was always best in work he did to please himself, and most publishers, realizing this, gave him a free rein. His illustrations became pictures, as independent of text or topical interest as his paintings. Several,

indeed, were reproductions of oils evidently drawn on the block by him, such as *Snap the Whip* and *High Tide.*

Wood-engraving is the simplest form of engraving. Essentially it is the same as printing from type; the raised surfaces print instead of the incised lines as in intaglio engraving. The impression is in flat black, with no variation in tone, so that the line lacks the variety of the etched, lithographed or copper-engraved line. As a reproductive medium it could offer only an approximation of the original (though often a marvellously skillful one), for even in a pen drawing the density of the ink is not uniform. When it came to reproducing pictures in full tone, it fell still further short. It could render gray by alternating black and white lines, but the lines had to be relatively coarse, and the result inevitably missed the subtleties of the original.

Wood-engraving is essentially a line medium. It can use tone, but it has to retain the integrity of its linear nature, otherwise it becomes a dry, flat imitation of richer mediums. It calls for strong drawing, precise outlines, effective contrasts of lights and darks, and the utmost clarity and tangibility. The artists who used it most successfully were those who understood these limitations and adapted their style to them, as did most of the leading American illustrators of the 1860's and 1870's—Darley, Homer, Nast, Frost, Reinhart, Bush, Sheppard, Abbey. In the hands of men like these, who respected its nature, it was a beautiful medium, the very flatness of its blacks and whites giving it a decorative quality and making it harmonize perfectly with type.

But by the middle 1870's an opposite tendency was arising in the so-called "new school" of wood-engravers, who reproduced every kind of medium, not only drawings but oils, watercolors and even etchings, turning out marvels of technical skill in which every brushstroke, every variation of texture, every projection of pigment, were imitated in the black and white lines of the woodblock. In this technical orgy the true nature of wood-engraving was lost sight of. The "new school's" triumphs were like the tricks of a performing poodle, extraordinary but painful to watch. The best of these miracles of laborious handicraft never reproduced a painting as well as the photomechanical halftone, made in a fraction of the time.

Homer's illustrations belonged to the older, sounder tradition. His early work was in line, with some subsidiary tone. As he developed he used tone more and more, until most of his work of the 1870's was in full tone. His drawings on the block were probably in pencil and wash, really watercolors in black and white. But he seldom lost sight of the essentially linear nature of wood-engraving. The picture was built on a strong line drawing, tone being used as an enrichment but remaining subordinate. Outlines were bold and the areas of light and shadow sharply defined. Everything was clear-cut, with no trying for soft or melting effects. Strong contrasts of darks and lights produced rich tonal values. His innate severity of style, stiff but attractive in its very austerity, accorded well with the nature of the medium. The large simplicity of his forms and his instinctive sense of pattern gave these illustrations a handsome decorative quality.

It is as difficult to discover any outside influences as in his paintings, although his style belonged in the general Anglo-American tradition in its sober naturalism and its shunning of grotesqueness and caricature, as contrasted with the plastic freedom of French and German graphic art. Of the English school it was closest to his contemporaries Tenniel, Pinwell and Sandys. Not as academic or finished a craftsman as these Englishmen, he showed fresher observation, stronger form, and a decorative sense unlike any contemporary's. In style as in subjects, the American and more specifically the New England character of his work was unmistakable. In his illustrations for such typically New England writers as Whittier, Lucy Larcom and Lowell, one feels that rare happening, a perfect rapport between writer and illustrator, and one regrets that he did not do more such books; a *Snow-Bound* illustrated by Homer would have been one of the classics of American bookmaking.

His culminating achievements were the drawings in *Harper's Weekly* in 1873 and 1874, mostly pictures of children based on his Gloucester watercolors of the time. He composed them with unusual care, using sketches in other mediums, taking parts of them and combining them. *Ship-building, Gloucester,* for example, was made up of two oils and a watercolor, resulting in a composition more complete than any of the originals. Instances of this method of composing could be multipled. These illustrations were among

the most carefully designed of all his works, comparable to the best of his mature paintings. By now he knew how his drawings were going to look when translated into wood-engraving, and how to get the most out of the medium. They were also the best-engraved of all his work, for American engravers had gained greatly in skill since the 1850's.

James E. Kelly, who was on *Harper's* at this time, together with Abbey and Reinhart, told how, when Homer used to call with sketches, he was received "with marked consideration" by the art editor, Charles Parsons. The latter would make suggestions which Homer was always ready to accept. Homer would then take a desk and complete his drawing on the block, while Abbey and Reinhart and the other young artists "gathered around him, and no doubt profited by watching his methods."

At the top of his popularity as an illustrator, Homer suddenly stopped. After 1874 he had only one illustration in *Harper's Weekly* and only a few elsewhere. It would be interesting to know why. He later told John W. Beatty that it was because he was dissatisfied with the reproduction of *Snap the Whip,* but since *Harper's* gave it a double-page spread and one of their best engravers, and as he did more than a year's work afterwards for them, including some of his best drawings, we must take this with a grain of salt. A likelier reason is that he had discovered a richer medium, watercolor.

VIII

"Until recently, water-colors have not found much favor in this country," wrote a critic in 1873. "They have been looked upon as pretty fancy work, fit for girls and amateurs, and the terms 'washy' and 'weak' have been almost universally applied to them." The earliest American art had been largely portraiture, in which watercolor could not compete with the more substantial oil medium. When landscape arrived it took the form of the big, highly finished Hudson River canvas rather than the small, intimate watercolor. Watercolor is delicate and swift, the medium for artists intent on capturing the changing aspects of nature; but American landscape art was solid and static. Such watercolors as were painted in America before the mid-century were for reproduction, such as Audubon's great bird series and the "views"

of J. W. Hill, or they were the work of young ladies and amateurs, or the occasional relaxation of artists whose chief work lay in other fields. Not until after the Civil War did watercolor begin to be used widely as an independent medium worthy of serious artists. In 1866 the American Society of Painters in Water Colors was founded, but it was several years before it gained popular support.

Homer had painted an occasional small watercolor and had sometimes heightened his drawings with touches of color, but it was not until 1873, when he was thirty-seven, that he began really to practise the medium of which he was to become a master. A collection of English watercolors shown at the National Academy that spring may have stimulated his interest. In June and July he worked at Gloucester, producing a group of watercolors of children playing in the harbor and the country around. The medium suited him perfectly from the first. In it he could work directly from nature, recording his impressions swiftly, securing an instantaneous grasp of mass and action. Always essentially a draftsman, he now had a vehicle in which he could proceed directly from a pencil drawing to a finished picture in color. Thenceforth it was in watercolor that he first captured new scenes and subjects, to be later embodied in oil.

His first watercolors were small in scale, tight in handling, and somewhat like colored drawings. A good deal of gouache was used, and it was several years before he learned to take full advantage of the transparency of the medium, with the white paper showing through. But at once he achieved purer color than ever before. Even used opaquely the medium had a brilliancy that his oils had never attained and would not for years.

Among all Homer's works these first watercolors have a special quality. Evidently done on the spot and not subsequently worked over, they are reality seen with a fresh, clear eye and recorded without hesitation or afterthoughts. To the innocent vision shown in his oils they added a new keenness and spontaneity, and a brevity that knew when to stop. These little pictures of children fishing or wading or picking berries in sunlit meadows beside the ocean, have the freshness of life's morning; they are the purest expressions in all his work of childhood's unclouded joy in sunlight and summer and the sea.

From this time on watercolor was as important to him as oil, and few summers passed without his using it. He first exhibited at the Water Color Society in the spring of 1874, and the following spring was represented by no less than thirty-four pictures, of which ten or more were sold. He became a member in 1877 and remained one until his death.

His discovery of watercolor was probably the chief reason for his giving up illustrating. By this time his illustrations were printed pictures, essentially watercolors in black and white. In watercolor itself he now had a richer and freer medium, closer to oil, and one that from the first was popular and brought him steady if not large financial returns.

IX

A portrait of Homer as he approached forty is given in the unpublished memoirs of the illustrator and sculptor James E. Kelly, who as a boy in his 'teens in the early 1870's was working in Harper's art department. He described Homer as "erect, slim, well-groomed, military-looking," already slightly bald, with dark, close-cropped hair, brilliant black eyes, a prominent straight nose, clean-cut, sensitive mouth and chin, and a dark moustache "brushed abruptly aside with a slight twist, like a cavalry officer. He had the movements and graceful bearing of a thoroughbred; was dressed to perfection—markedly so; his black cutaway coat and steel-gray trousers had the set and precision of a uniform."

Young Kelly worshipped the great man from afar until one day his boss Charles Parsons, aware of his admiration, sent him to Homer's studio to deliver a block, slipping a card of introduction into the package. "It was generally understood that Homer resented callers during working hours, regardless of who they were," wrote Kelly. "When I knocked at Homer's door, he responded by partly opening it but blocking the entrance." But after reading the card he asked the boy in, showed him his work, and got him to pose with a professional model for an illustration of a young man making love to a young lady in a boat. From then on Homer invited the boy often to his studio, gave him the run of the place, and even taught him painting. "No one could have been kinder to me," said Kelly.

Of the studio Kelly wrote: "Everything was in perfect order, spic-and-span looking, like himself; as he started to talk to me he stopped, went over and picked up a thread of lint from the dustless carpet, and threw it into the scrap basket. . . . During the intervals of his talk, if anything was out of order, he would shift it into its place; a thread, or a piece of paper on the floor, would bring him to a standstill until he could pick it up."

When he showed his pictures "he had a story to tell of each." Bringing out the Civil War drawing of Lincoln and Grant, he told how he had sketched them as they stood on the railway platform at City Point. "I asked, 'Did they pose for you?' 'No,' he said, 'I wouldn't think of asking such great men to pose for me.' To this I answered, 'Why, if I were you, I would have asked them, and I should think they would be glad to pose for you!' To me he was a bigger man than either of them, and I couldn't understand his modesty."

On one visit Homer said to young Kelly, "Did you ever practise drawing high hats? You should"; and taking out his own, he placed it on a table, saying, "There is a great deal of drawing in a high hat, to get not only its curves, but its delicate variations in the outline which give it style." He placed it on its side, showing part of the inside, and "pointed out the beauty and grace of the complicated lines, and the precision required to give the proper effect." He added, "They are generally badly drawn; if you can draw a high hat correctly, you can draw anything." He also put some old shoes on the table, and said, "You should practise drawing old shoes and getting their character," pointing out the different character and expressions in well-worn shoes.

Homer told Kelly, if he ever wanted to learn to paint, to come to him. One day Abbey gave Kelly a box of oil colors and advised him to remind the artist of his promise. Homer showed him how to set his palette, using white, yellow ochre, red ochre, permanent blue and raw sienna. "As he finished he whirled around, leveled his black eyes upon me, and said sharply, 'Will you remember that?' 'Yes,' I promised." Homer then painted a sketch of a girl, mixing the colors "without puddling, which did not crush the minute granulations of the paint; and applied a light, deft, crisp touch to the canvas without the colors losing any of their original sparkle." Every point he drove home by turning, fastening his eyes on the boy and saying, "Do you

understand that?" "Yes." "Will you ever forget it?" "No." He added: "If you make a mistake in laying on your color, don't try to correct it; but take it off with a palette knife and paint it in fresh." "He finished the little figure, which was a brilliant one in effect; then, sitting back, he said, 'Will you ever forget what I have told you?' 'No.' " ("And I never have," added Kelly.)

X

Homer never had cause to complain of not being able to exhibit. He was represented in almost every exhibition of the National Academy from 1863 to 1880, often by several pictures, although generally hung in the smaller galleries or the dark corridor, seldom in the south gallery, the only good one. At the Water Color Society he showed every year but two from 1874 to 1881, often twenty or thirty works, more than any other artist. These were his two chief exhibiting mediums, but he also showed occasionally in the Brooklyn Art Association, the Artists' Fund Society and elsewhere, though not much outside New York.

At this time few artists had regular dealers. Samuel P. Avery, the leading New York dealer, sometimes exhibited his pictures and bought at least one. But most of his sales were from his studio or from the large exhibitions. Like his fellow artists he often put pictures into auctions, and sometimes held one-man sales, getting quick turnover at low prices. Such a sale, as we have seen, had preceded his trip to France; in the early 1870's he held a successful one of his war drawings in Boston.

In general his early pictures sold well. Naturally no young artist could expect to sell all or most of his works. By the time he was forty-five he had disposed of about eighty of the approximately two hundred oils he had painted, usually soon after they were finished. These sales included most of his important oils, many of those unsold being small or unfinished. Twenty or so paintings he gave away to friends, about twenty more were to be sold in later years; so that at his death something over a third of his early oils were still in his possession—not a large proportion compared to artists less popular.

What he got for them, however, was another matter. That his early prices

were small we may infer from the few that are known: *Army Boots* sold at auction in 1865 for $140, *Croquet* in 1871 for $36, *A Rainy Day in the Country* in 1873 for $155. In the National Academy of 1874 *School Time* was priced at $200, *Sunday Morning* at $300—asking prices, of course. For his watercolors there was a steady sale from the beginning at prices around $50 and $75. In general, he found a good market for his early work, but at very low prices. He was still far from the financial level of Bierstadt and Church, whose big canvases fetched $15,000 and $20,000.

What with illustrating, he was probably able to make a living, but he must have known difficult times. Luckily he was not alone in the world. His parents had suffered reverses and were living with relatives in Brooklyn; but his brother Charles, now chief chemist of the Valentine Company, varnish and paint manufacturers, was making a solid success of a profession in which he was a pioneer. Relations between the brothers were unusually close, and Charles always stood ready to help Winslow financially, which must have been frequently necessary in these early years. The Valentine brothers, Lawson and Henry, became close friends of Winslow and bought many of his watercolors.

While the public received his work cordially from the first, the critics gave it a colder reception. American criticism has seldom been at as low a level as in the decade after the Civil War—either incredibly naïve or pseudo-sophisticated in a way that was even worse. To most critics painting was a form of literature, and their first concern was the picture's story; their next, that it be a faithful imitation of nature, finished to the nth degree. Their elegance of tone, their horror of anything vulgar or improper, pass belief. Most of them had their eyes on Europe, and only the most established Americans received any notice from them.

Among the huge polished panoramas of Church and Bierstadt, the icy nudities of Bouguereau and Cabanel, the impeccable costume pieces of Gérôme and Meissonier, Homer's early pictures must have looked very modest and homely. For a full decade after he began to exhibit, critics paid little attention to him, except for the flurry over *Prisoners from the Front.* Reading the long fulsome reviews of the time one finds only the barest mention of him. Rare were critics like the anonymous one on the *Nation,* who

from the first criticized him intelligently and at length, saying as early as 1865: "He promises to retain the position, which we think he has already won, of our first painter of the human figure in action"; or the writer in *Harper's Weekly* who said of *High Tide* and other works in the Academy show of 1870: "The pictures are not wholly pleasing; perhaps the bathing scene—like another which he has in the east room—is not quite refined. But the pictures show a fresh eye and a wholesome independence of conventions with spirit and vigor. . . . If the critic must gibe, it should not be at such work, however faulty, but at the hopeless, conventional, dead and buried commonplace of many of the pictures, which suggest nothing but that the painter has seen nature only in very namby-pamby engravings. In the works of Mr. Homer and Mr. Hennessy you are very sure that the painter has really seen what he paints, and really tries to represent it. When he fails, it is therefore a hopeful failure." More typical was the remark of a Brooklyn paper apropos of *Long Branch*: "The success which attended 'Prisoners from the Front' seems to have somewhat spoiled a good artist." It was comments like this that made Homer say, "I'm sick of hearing about that picture."

When the critics did begin to pay him more attention, in the early 1870's, it was to attack him. His everyday American subjects, his unconventional figures, his summary handling, his color, seemed positively revolutionary to them. Often he was the only artist in an exhibition singled out for condemnation. What little praise he got was halfhearted compared to the eulogies of the favorites of the day. What particularly annoyed these gentry was his lack of that most cherished Victorian quality, "finish." The extent to which they harped on this is almost incredible. For example: "Mr. Winslow Homer, who rarely carries his works beyond the finish of sketches, sent several subjects broad enough in treatment, being mere indications of objects and effects, to please his most enthusiastic admirer. . . . Mr. Homer's style is wonderfully vigorous and original; with a few dashes of the brush, he suggests a picture, but a mere suggestion only, and it is a mistaken eccentricity which prevents its finish." "Mr. Homer is always perplexing. There are so much truth and vigour in his compositions that one can but admire them; and yet half-expressed thoughts, strange eccentricities of drawing, rude handling of material, seriously offset the charm of his undeniably fresh and

usually truthful themes. It is impossible to deny Mr. Homer's genius; it is equally impossible to be always satisfied with what he puts on canvas."

"Mr. Homer sends in the usual budget," the *Nation* commented wearily on his works in the Water Color Society exhibition of 1876. "It is hard to say whether irritation or pleasure prevails in contemplating the present works of this artist, they go so nimbly up to a certain point and stop so definitively within the goal. It may, perhaps, be acknowledged that his pictures are the only figure-pictures by an American exhibitor which are grasped with the real dramatic force. Each one is perfect in telling its story. . . . But each is shouted out of breath so hastily and rawly that the prevailing impression perhaps is a sense that we are defrauded of a suggested delight. . . . The charm of competent finish is wanting. Would finish have spoiled the charm? If so, the short-coming of Mr. Homer's art is confessed. . . . It is such a beautiful thing to tell these healthful stories with all the simplicity, all that confinement to the idea, which we find in Japanese artists, that we can only mourn the loss of the fine painter Mr. Homer would be if he could give us the developed painting instead of the sketchy impression. Mr. Eakins, whose studies of American sports seemed to complete what Mr. Homer aimed at, is regretfully missed this year."

Another quality in Homer that distressed the critics was his color. "It is impossible to understand Mr. Homer's flesh-tints or much of his colouring," wrote the *Art Journal*. "His faces are always like Joseph's coat, of many colours." But another writer rose to his defense: "Many persons object to Mr. Homer's paintings on account of their color; we do not want him to change it, for we believe it suits his subjects as truly as the smack of checker-berry-leaves or birch-bark agrees with those hardy growths of northern woods."

But even if the critics disliked his work, they could not long disregard it. As Margaret G. Van Rensselaer wrote later: "A noteworthy point about Mr. Homer's work, one that proves its inherent originality of mood and strength of utterance, is that it always makes itself felt, no matter amid what surroundings. Every passer-by marks it at once, and is apt to give it an unusually decided verdict in his mind, whether of approval or dispraise. . . . As an instance in point, I may refer to the way in which it affected my own childish

eyes, in days when I dared to hold very few positive opinions in such matters. As a youthful visitor to our exhibitions and student of our illustrated papers, I remember to have hated Mr. Homer in quite vehement and peculiar fashion, acknowledging thereby his individuality and his force, and also his freedom from the neat little waxy prettinesses of idea and expression which are so alien to true art, but always so delightful to childish minds, whether in bodies childish or adult."

The most perceptive criticism, though in some ways the most devastating, was written by young Henry James, with an eye trained in European art and a pen subtler than any professional critic's. About to abandon America and throw in his lot with Europe, James recognized in Homer's work the pictorial embodiment of everything he loathed in his native land. Reviewing the art season of 1875 in the *Galaxy,* he wrote: "Few of the painters represented at the Academy did much in the way of winning from us an expenditure of fancy and ingenuity. The most striking pictures in the exhibition were perhaps those of Mr. Homer: and this artist certainly can rarely have had occasion to complain of being judged with too much subtlety. Before Mr. Homer's little barefoot urchins and little girls in calico sun-bonnets, straddling beneath a cloudless sky upon the national rail fence, the whole effort of the critic is instinctively to contract himself, to double himself up, as it were, so that he can creep into the problem and examine it humbly and patiently, if a trifle wonderingly. Mr. Homer's pictures, in other words, imply no explanatory sonnets; the artist turns his back squarely and frankly upon literature. In this he may be said to be typical of the general body of his fellow artists. . . . Mr. Homer goes in, as the phrase is, for perfect realism, and cares not a jot for such fantastic hairsplitting as the distinction between beauty and ugliness. He is a genuine painter; that is, to see, and to reproduce what he sees, is his only care; to think, to imagine, to select, to refine, to compose, to drop into any of the intellectual tricks with which other people sometimes try to eke out the dull pictorial vision—all this Mr. Homer triumphantly avoids. He not only has no imagination, but he contrives to elevate this rather blighting negative into a blooming and honorable positive. He is almost barbarously simple, and, to our eye, he is horribly ugly; but there is nevertheless something one likes about him. What is it? For

ourselves, it is not his subjects. We frankly confess that we detest his subjects—his barren plank fences, his glaring, bold, blue skies, his big, dreary, vacant lots of meadows, his freckled, straight-haired Yankee urchins, his flat-breasted maidens, suggestive of a dish of rural doughnuts and pie, his calico sun-bonnets, his flannel shirts, his cowhide boots. He has chosen the least pictorial features of the least pictorial range of scenery and civilization; he has resolutely treated them as if they *were* pictorial, as if they were every inch as good as Capri or Tangiers; and, to reward his audacity, he has incontestably succeeded. It makes one feel the value of consistency; it is a proof that if you will only be doggedly literal, though you may often be unpleasing, you will at least have a stamp of your own. Mr. Homer has the great merit, moreover, that he naturally sees everything at one with its envelope of light and air. He sees not in lines, but in masses, in gross, broad masses. Things come already modelled to his eye. If his masses were only sometimes a trifle more broken, and his brush a good deal richer—if it had a good many more secrets and mysteries and coquetries, he would be, with his vigorous way of looking and seeing, even if fancy in the matter remained the same dead blank, an almost distinguished painter. In its suggestion of this blankness of fancy the picture of the young farmer flirting with the pie-nurtured maiden in the wheat field is really an intellectual curiosity. The want of grace, of intellectual detail, of reflected light, could hardly go further; but the picture was its author's best contribution, and a very honest, and vivid, and manly piece of work. Our only complaint with it is that it is damnably ugly! We spoke just now of Mr. La Farge, and it occurs to us that the best definition of Mr. Homer to the initiated would be, that he is an elaborate contradiction of Mr. La Farge. In the Palace of Art there are many mansions!"

IV

THE MIDDLE YEARS

HOMER was slow to mature. Unable to learn from others, having to work everything out for himself, he did not come of age until long after more facile and impressionable men. But in compensation he kept on growing right up to the end of his life. He was forty before he began to show signs of maturity, fifty before he discovered the path he wanted to follow, sixty before his art reached its full stature.

As he approached his fortieth year the process of growth became accelerated. His subjects grew more adult. Childhood remained a favorite theme, but he was less exclusively concerned with it. Women played a larger part and were more subtly understood. Branching out into fresh fields, he attacked more masculine types of subjects. Corresponding changes took place in his style. The earlier naïveté disappeared, and with it the unconscious charm that belongs to youth and can never be recaptured. Its place was taken by greater naturalistic strength. His paintings became larger in scale, more completely composed and technically abler. None of these changes were sudden or radical, being products of an inevitable growth from within rather than of influences from without.

II

His work of these years, as earlier, was much preoccupied with women. But his attitude was less remote, more intimate. The athletic miss was less in evidence and the young ladies now were seen idling in hammocks, reading novels, embroidering, picking flowers, catching butterflies and engaged in other gentle feminine occupations. Often they were shown singly, as individuals rather than merely parts of a scene. Still not idealized, they were pictured with a delicate precision, a sensitiveness to individual character, that would have made him one of our finest portraitists. The note of sentiment was stronger, but still reserved, implicit rather than openly expressed. The artist's attitude, though warmer and more intimate than before, was far from the sensuousness of Manet and Renoir or the mordant realism of

Degas. He was still typically American in his air of detachment, his refinement, his lack of frank sensuousness. In heavier hands these pictures might have turned into sentimentality, but Homer's utter honesty and freshness of vision kept them genuine and delightful. Among all his works they have a special and unexpected charm.

Among them was a series of watercolors dating from about 1875 on, more finished and subtle than anything he had done before in the medium, and curiously like Thomas Eakins' genre watercolors of a few years later, though with a less penetrating sense of character. These were among Homer's first works to meet with general approval from the critics. One reviewer told how, as he was going through the Water Color Society exhibition of 1877, "suddenly our eye was caught and held by studies of such remarkable force and precision of tones, and subtlety of hues, that we involuntarily exclaimed to ourselves that some new artist had dawned upon the French or the Roman world."

It was probably apropos of one of these watercolors, of a girl who had pricked her finger on a rosebush, that John La Farge told this incident: "The scene is the old studio building in Tenth Street. . . . I met him on the stairs as I was going up, and I knew by his gesture that he was coming to me. We went up to his room without a word and he pointed to a picture he had just painted. It was that of a girl who had hurt her hand, and the expression of the face was what in my Newport language I know as 'pitying herself.' This was as delicate an expression as it is possible to conceive. The painter of the surf and the fisherman and the sailor and the hunter and every active and fierce edge of the sea was here touching one of the most impossible things to render. He said nothing; he pointed; I understood. He wished to show me that he, too, could paint otherwise, and we went downstairs without a word."

It may have been with one of these girls that Homer had the love affair of his life. Because of his reticence the whole story will never be known, except that it ended unhappily because he did not have the income to marry. In later years there was one painting that he always kept on an easel in his studio—a brown-haired girl with dark eyes and a vivacious face full of character, seated barefoot on the grass, holding a hand of cards and looking

straight at the spectator, evidently asking the question that is the picture's title, "Shall I Tell Your Fortune?" Family legend is that this was the girl. It was probably she who also appears, seated on the beach, in *High Tide.*

As far as we know, no other woman ever took her place. By middle life Homer was a confirmed bachelor. That this affair deeply affected his attitude towards women and society, there can be no question. In his youth, though reserved, he had led a normal social life. From this time on he became more and more unsociable, and his taste for solitude grew. And after a few years women were to disappear from his art.

III

At the same time that he was painting these feminine themes Homer discovered a new world of masculine subjects in the North Woods. At least as early as 1870 he visited the Adirondacks, still largely virgin wilderness. These trips, often made with his brother Charles, were partly for camping, fishing and hunting, but they resulted in several pictures—two oils in 1870, a group of watercolors in 1874, and a number of illustrations.

His first important Adirondack painting was *The Two Guides,* dated 1876 (pl. 16). A bearded old mountaineer and a tall young one stand on a ridge surrounded by mist-wreathed mountaintops. Homer's friend Russell Shurtleff, the landscape painter, who lived in Keene Valley in the heart of the Adirondacks, wrote in later years: "Many of his Adirondack pictures were painted here in Keene Valley. One of the strongest, I think he called 'The Old Guide,' represented 'Old Mountain Philips' (since made famous by Charles Dudley Warner), and a young man noted for his size—and his red shirt. He still lives here—and is still wearing, if not the same shirt, one precisely like it." The old man fits well Warner's description of "Old Mountain Phelps," guide, philosopher and local celebrity: "He was a true citizen of the wilderness. Thoreau would have liked him. . . . His tawny hair was long and tangled, matted now many years past the possibility of being entered by a comb. His features were small and delicate, and set in the frame of a reddish beard. . . . His clothes seemed to have been put on him once for all, like the bark of a tree, a long time ago. . . . This woodsman, this

trapper, this hunter, this fisherman, this sitter on a log, and philosopher, was the real proprietor of the region over which he was willing to guide the stranger. . . . In all that country, he alone had noticed the sunsets, and observed the delightful processes of the seasons, taken pleasure in the woods for themselves, and climbed mountains solely for the sake of the prospect."

This was Homer's most mature painting to date. The keen characterization of the contrasting figures, the delicate precision of details, even to the ferns and wild flowers, did not detract from the breadth of conception or sense of space and height, of the clear air and all-pervading light of the mountains. In light and atmosphere it was his most advanced work, almost photographically exact, though no more so than Degas' early landscapes, which it resembled in many ways. His innocent eye was here combined with a new naturalistic skill. His vision had retained a pristine freshness that matched the freshness of the scene, filling the picture with the exhilaration of the mountaintop and the virgin wilderness. Here was a new and more vigorous kind of subject, handled with impressive ability—a foretaste of much that was to follow.

IV

Another new subject was negro life. His interest in negroes, as we have seen, dated back to the war. In 1875 he revisited Petersburg, Virginia, scene of the long siege that ended the war. Here he spent most of his time in the colored section, working among the cabins and using the negroes as models. Wartime bitterness had by no means disappeared, and his activities aroused resentment among the white people. A group of young fire-eaters decided to drive the "damned nigger-painter" out of town. Homer heard of this but paid no attention to it. One day he was sitting on his hotel porch when a tough-looking individual rode up, dismounted, and started threateningly towards him. The artist remained seated, his hands in his pockets, and as he said later, "I looked him in the eyes, as mother used to tell us to look at a wild cow." Halfway to the porch the bad man hesitated, then turned and rode away. As soon as he was out of sight a gentleman from Texas who had been sitting nearby crawled out from under a bench. "What did you get down there for?" asked Homer. "Well," said the Texan, "it wasn't my

fight, and I thought there was going to be some shooting." "Why did he go away?" Homer wondered. "Well, I'll tell you. He thought you had a derringer in each hand, and were going to get the drop on him." The artist was not molested again.

From this visit and others in the next year or so resulted a series of oils and watercolors that were among his most original works. Few Americans had painted the negro, and with honorable exceptions such as Mount, they had made him a figure of fun. Homer was one of the first to picture him seriously. His sympathy was manifest in every work. In *A Visit from the Old Mistress* the white woman calling on her ex-slaves is elegant and self-assured, the negresses respectful, both sides retaining something of their former relation, but the contrast between the mistress' stiff, prim figure and the easy, indolent poses of the colored women show where Homer's interest lay. In *Sunday Morning in Virginia* (pl. 17), where a colored family in a cabin listens to a young negress read the Bible, their concentration is touching, and the old mammy's face seems an epitome of all the vast patience of her race. Here for the first time in American art was a mature understanding of negro character, not in its humorous aspects only but in its childlike simplicity, its emotional warmth, its deep religiousness.

Negro physiognomy fascinated Homer and he portrayed it more accurately than any American had done before. His negroes were not blacked-up whites; they were drawn with a sure grasp of characteristic shapes of head and features, typical attitudes and gestures. There was no touch of caricature; on the contrary, an appreciation of the race's physical beauty that no predecessor had shown. In *The Cotton Pickers* he gave his young negresses a statuesque grace that few of his white girls had possessed. When he was in Virginia, according to a writer of the time, a "First-Family belle" asked him, " 'Why don't you paint our lovely girls instead of those dreadful creatures?' 'Because these are the purtiest,' he said in his gruff, final way."

Humor was not absent, but not humor at the negroes' expense so much as sympathy with their primeval gaiety, as in *The Carnival* (pl. 17), where two women are solemnly sewing up a young buck in a brilliant pierrot costume. Here was another thing that attracted Homer—negro color, not only in their bodies but in their clothes, garish but instinctively right. The yellow, scarlet

and blue of the man's costume, the women's patched dresses with hues of blue, green and mauve, the mahogany flesh, all under strong sunlight picking out individual tones, revealed a color sense less inhibited than ever before, full of unexpected contrasts and curiously sophisticated harmonies, darker than the impressionist gamut but having much of its quality. It was about this time that we find the critics complaining particularly of the "queerness" of his color.

His largest and most ambitious negro painting was *Upland Cotton*, exhibited at the National Academy in 1879. A reviewer called it "a remarkable penetration of Japanese thought into American expression. . . . The picture is a superb piece of decoration, with its deep, queer colours like the Japanese, dull greens, dim reds, and strange, neutral blues and pinks. Japanese Art is not gorgeous, like the Turkish and Persian, but its peculiar and artistic subtlety has been assimilated precisely by Mr. Homer. This picture seems to us original and important as an example of new thought." Shortly after this it dropped out of sight, and it was only recently that a painting of cotton plants which had remained in Homer's studio, on being cleaned revealed two figures of negresses, showing that he later painted over this important work of his early years.

V

A curious bypath in Homer's development was his work in painted tiles, inspired by the Tile Club, of which he was one of the founders. The club was a product of the decorative frenzy that swept the country in the wake of the Centennial Exposition of 1876, leading young ladies to take up china-painting and pyrography and create cozy corners adorned with fishnets and crossed oars. "A few years ago," wrote the club's historians, "when the decorative mania or cacoethes had fallen like a destructive angel upon the more flourishing cities of America, turning orderly houses into bristling and impenetrable curiosity-shops, and causing the loveliest and purest maidens in the land to smell of turpentine, certain youthful artists began to notice the goings-on of their sisters, their sweethearts and their wives. Stealing without remorse from these ladies their colors, their china plaques, . . . and using the mighty brushes heretofore dedicated to more sublime tasks, they began

experimenting upon potsherds and Spanish tiles." As a member remarked: "This is a decorative age. We should do something decorative, if we would not be behind the times." One thing that attracted painters to tiles was the transparency and brilliancy of their color.

The Tile Club, started in the autumn of 1877, was an informal affair without officers, constitution or dues, its only rule that the membership be small, usually twelve. Among the founders were Homer, Chase, Abbey, Alden Weir, F. Hopkinson Smith, William R. O'Donovan, C. S. Reinhart and Arthur Quartley. It met every Wednesday night in the studio of a member, who furnished blank tiles, as well as beer, cheese and crackers, receiving in return all the tiles produced that evening. No subjects were dictated. Sometimes ideas were taken from old sketchbooks, more often they were unpremeditated. Musical members sang and played, and invariably the evening wound up with one of those arguments dear to artistic youth in every land and age. In summer the club went on excursions of several days, travelling by carriage, boat and once by canalboat. All these doings were recorded in a series of articles in *Scribner's*, full of high spirits and rather adolescent humor. Members' names were disguised by farfetched pseudonyms, but Homer is easily identified, by allusion to his Greek namesake, as "the 'Obtuse Bard' (whose birthplace was rendered obscure by a bad habit he had of promiscuously begging his bread, for purposes of erasure)." It was at the Obtuse Bard's studio that the club's first annual dinner was held, "one of the most crisp and toasty affairs that ever took place since the time of Lucullus, involving, as it did, too, a singularly small consideration in cash *per capita*," and on this occasion the club's first excursion was planned. But the Obtuse Bard is not mentioned in the chronicle of this excursion or of the club's subsequent adventures, nor does his name appear in a sumptuous volume about the club published in 1887, from which we may infer that Homer's growing unsociability had led him to resign.

In the club's first year, 1878, Homer painted a number of tiles, including two entire sets for fireplaces. Each tile was of the club's standard size, eight inches square, but the careful design and finished workmanship, and the fact that they were in full color whereas most members worked in monochrome because of the artificial light, suggest that he may have done them in his

studio. Some were versions of earlier subjects, but in the most ambitious, a twelve-tile fireplace for his brother Charles, he essayed an entirely new kind of theme—a shepherd and shepherdess in conventionalized eighteenth-century costume, reminiscent of Boucher's rustics and quite unlike the freckled farmers and "pie-nurtured maidens" that Henry James had complained of. All these bodices, ruffles, knee breeches, floating ribbons and shepherd's crooks seemed strange conceits for Homer, showing the devastating effect of the decorative mania on even the most hard-shelled Yankee of them all. Here, for the first time in his art, were an idyllicism and a decorative intent that were fully conscious. The result, with all its absurdity, had a surprising inventiveness and charm, while the clear-cut draftsmanship set these tiles apart from the feeble decorative efforts that most of his colleagues produced.

VI

From the late 1870's on, Homer devoted certain summers almost entirely to watercolor. It was in these seasons of intensive work direct from nature that he made his discoveries in outdoor light and color—discoveries later embodied in oils, but not for several years. His watercolors were always ahead of his oils in light and atmosphere, brilliancy of color, and freedom of handling. It may have been a realization of the relative darkness of his oils and their lack of transparency that led him to concentrate for several years on watercolor.

The summer of 1878 he spent at Mountainville, New York, near Cornwall, where Charles Homer's business partner Lawson Valentine had a country place called Houghton Farm, in a pleasant farming country of hills, narrow valleys and sloping pastures. Here he painted scores of watercolors. Children and farm life were again his themes, but boys were less prominent and instead we see half-grown girls and young women in smocks and sunbonnets tending sheep, lying in hillside pastures, resting in the shade. His favorite model was a girl in her early 'teens, the daughter of a poor "mountaineer," who the first time she posed came dressed in her Sunday best, and had to be sent home to put on everyday clothes. But Homer must have brought his eighteenth-century shepherdess' costume along with him, for

now and then these adolescents appear in bodices and beribboned straw hats, carrying shepherd's crooks, but wearing all this finery with a touch of Yankee gawkiness that proved he had lost none of his sharp-eyed truthfulness. The result was an engaging blend of awkwardness and grace, of the realistic and the rococo.

Concentrating on a few themes and doing them over and over, he gained greatly in skill this summer. His drawing became freer and more playful. Light was clearer, and his color the highest he had attained, far brighter than his oils of the time. The white of the paper was used freely, and the washes were handled crisply and with delightful economy. There was a more planned patterning of light and shade. The pastoral poetry of these watercolors, saved from prettiness by his fresh, candid vision, gave them a delicate grace unique in his work.

Based on this summer's sketches but obviously painted in the studio rather than from nature were several larger watercolors and oils of shepherdesses, the most consciously idyllic pictures he had done. They were also the most deliberately composed; evidently he was becoming increasingly aware of the importance of composition. The results had an odd charm, but were not altogether happy; for the first time in his painting one feels something distinctly artificial. Temporarily he had lost the direct contact with visual reality that was one of the sources of his vitality, without compensating gain, for as design these pictures were curiously conventional. They marked the beginning of a phase that was to last several years, during which he struggled, not always successfully, to reconcile deliberate composition with the simple naturalism that had dominated his work heretofore.

The Houghton Farm watercolors turned out to be the most popular work he had done for some time. Many of them were bought by Lawson Valentine, whose support and that of his brother Henry were of material aid to Homer at this stage of his career. No less than twenty-nine were shown at the Water Color Society in 1879. "It is understood," said the *Nation*, "that the Water-Color Society merely received from him his portfolios of art stenography, with permission to choose, and that the Society quickly found they wanted all." This showing brought him the first wholehearted critical approval he had received in years. "Winslow Homer never fully found himself until

he found the American shepherdess," wrote Sheldon a few years later. "The career of this artist was long disappointing to some of his friends. That he had something in him, every one of them admitted and proclaimed; but, why it did not come to the surface, nobody seemed to know. Theories to account for the deficiency were not lacking; . . . and, while the theorizers were splitting hairs with their battle-axes, the painter himself stepped into the midst of them, and introduced the American shepherdess. At sight of the maid, Philosophy herself stood still. One touch of nature made the three parties kin, and Winslow Homer was pronounced to be a nondescript no longer."

Homer might have capitalized his new popularity and gone on turning out pretty shepherdesses by the dozen. But, characteristically, his next summer's work was quite different. Several watercolors of men plowing and boys driving cows to pasture were plain rustic realism, without a trace of fancy dress. Perhaps feeling the need of exercise in draftsmanship, he devoted himself particularly to drawing, making many pencil sketches of children at play, in which he achieved an increased freedom and flexibility. A few small oils of women picking blossoms, all evidently painted outdoors, showed a new color sensitiveness, doubtless a result of his discoveries in watercolor. They evidenced close study of the subtler modifications of light, such as reflected lights, and greater awareness of atmosphere. Figures no longer stood out as sharp-edged silhouettes but were linked in color with their surroundings. Skies were no longer bright hard blue contrasting startlingly with the warm earth, but softer tones that held their place. A new tenderness appeared in his color, which was lighter and cooler, with hues suggesting impressionism.

No greater contrast could be imagined than that between these feminine themes and his most important oil of the time, *Camp Fire*, a night scene in the Adirondack woods, with a fire burning in the foreground and two men beside it, against the impenetrable blackness of the forest. Russell Shurtleff wrote that it was painted in Keene Valley, and was "so real, a woodsman could tell what kind of logs were burning by the sparks that rose in long curved lines." A tour de force, and a successful one, it was a vigorous piece of naturalism, with all the utter originality of vision that was Homer's

when he was in direct contact with nature. The contrast between it and the shepherdess pictures of a few months earlier reveals a fundamental split in his aims at this time—between the masculine and the feminine in subject, and between direct naturalism and a conventionalized style. *Camp Fire* marked a breaking-away from the feminine and conventional to a fresh, masculine realism, and as such was prophetic of what was to come.

VII

That Homer was much preoccupied at this time with problems of outdoor light, was shown in a second article on him in the *Art Journal* in 1880, again by Sheldon, one of the few critics who was able to get him to talk. "Almost everything that he has shown to the public as a result of his professional efforts has been drawn directly from Nature," wrote Sheldon, "and under the impression made by it upon his mind at the time when he committed it to paper or to canvas. No painter in this country, probably, has a profounder respect for such out-door work, a more lively apprehension of its value, or a sincerer and more serious aversion to manufactured and conventional studio-pictures. He paints what he has seen; he tells what he has felt; he records what he knows. Now, a painter who begins and finishes in-doors a figure of a man, woman, or child, that is out-doors, misses a hundred little facts, the absence of which is sure to convict him of his offense against truth—a hundred little accidental effects of sunshine and shadow that can be reproduced only in the immediate presence of Nature. No matter how carefully drawn the figure may be, nor how admirably composed the composition may be, nor how exquisite the sentiment, nor how brilliant and harmonious the colour-scheme, the picture cannot be true unless it has been executed, in part, at least, under the all-embracing sky. One of the chief causes of the failure of some of our finest executants with the brush is their ignorance or neglect of this essential condition. It is so in Europe as well as in America; in Paris as well as in New York. Of Bouguereau, for instance, Mr. Homer says: 'I wouldn't go across the street to see a Bouguereau. His pictures look false; he does not get the truth of that which he wishes to represent; his light is not out-door light; his works are waxy and artificial. They are extremely

near being frauds.' Yet Mr. Homer is the last man in the world to be blind to what are really excellences in a painter like Bouguereau.

"He believes, however, that the most complete pictures are not founded upon out-door studies. 'The great compositions of the old masters,' he says, 'were almost all interiors. You can't control the thing out-doors.' Yet he admits that it is possible, sometimes, to find a picture—a complete one—out-doors; to meet with a combination of facts so happy that a sketch of it would deserve to be called a picture—a rare case, of course, but not an impossible one. His 'Adirondack Camp-Fire' is almost an example in point. He painted it out-doors; but the large tree on the left, the line of which answers to the line of the pole of the tent, is not in the original scene. He found it elsewhere, built a fire in front of it, observed the effect, and transferred it to the canvas. With this exception, the composition is a general transcript of the surroundings of a fire lighted one night while he was camping in the Adirondacks. 'I prefer every time,' he says, 'a picture composed and painted out-doors. The thing is done without your knowing it. Very much of the work now done in studios should be done in the open air. This making studies and then taking them home to use them is only half right. You get composition, but you lose freshness; you miss the subtle and, to the artist, the finer characteristics of the scene itself. I tell you it is impossible to paint an out-door figure in studio-light with any degree of certainty. Out-doors you have the sky overhead giving one light; then the reflected light from whatever reflects; then the direct light of the sun; so that, in the blending and suffusing of these several luminations, there is no such thing as a line to be seen anywhere. I can tell in a second if an out-door picture with figures has been painted in a studio. When there is any sunlight in it, the shadows are not sharp enough; and, when it is an over-cast day, the shadows are too positive. Yet you see these faults constantly in pictures in the exhibitions, and you know that they are bad. Nor can they be avoided when such work is done in-doors. By the nature of the case the light in a studio must be emphasized at some point or part of the figure; the very fact that there are walls around the painter which shut out the sky shows this. I couldn't even copy in a studio a picture made out-doors; I shouldn't know where the colours came from, nor how to reproduce them. I couldn't possibly do it. Yet an attempted copy

might be more satisfactory to the public, because more like a made picture.' "

This, Homer's longest recorded utterance on art, reveals his simple naturalistic philosophy. But his reasoning (or perhaps Sheldon's report of it) is far from clear. He insists on the importance of outdoor work, yet admits that "the great compositions of the old masters were almost all interiors. You can't control the thing out-doors." Evidently there was an unresolved conflict in his mind between the claims of naturalistic truth and composition, between working direct from nature and composing in the studio. But that naturalistic truth came first, his words leave no doubt, nor that he believed entirely in the necessity of painting outdoors.

VIII

This belief he carried out to the full next summer, that of 1880. He settled on Ten Pound Island, a tiny spot in the middle of Gloucester harbor, staying with the lighthouse keeper, whose wife was related to his friend Samuel T. Preston. "Here he lived for one summer," wrote J. Eastman Chase, "rowing across to the town only when in need of materials. The freedom from intrusion which he found in this little spot was precisely to his liking." "He knew plenty of nice people," Joseph E. Baker told Downes, "but he associated with two fishermen, and preferred their company."

Here he worked entirely in watercolor, with occasional drawings, producing over a hundred pictures. His subjects were all around him—the life of the harbor, fishing schooners coming and going, and especially boys and their activities—sailing, rowing, swimming, busy with the life of the waterfront, idling away the long summer days. Never had his sympathy with boyhood and its adventurousness been keener, and these were among his freshest and most delightful idylls of childhood.

These watercolors were obviously painted outdoors. They were informally composed. His chief interest was evidently in light and nature's changing effects. Surrounded by this great expanse of water and sky, he attacked problems of luminosity as he never had before. (Only three years earlier the same scene had inspired William Morris Hunt to paint *Gloucester Harbor*, of which he said that he had at last done a picture "with *light* in it.") Sun-

light as Homer now painted it was not direct and strong, like a spotlight casting sharp black shadows, but a white light that pervaded the whole picture and unified it. Shadows were no longer dark and opaque but luminous with reflected lights. There was a new feeling for weather and time of day. Full sunlight was varied with the veiled light of gray days. Skies were subtler and more changing. The general tone was light and silvery. New cool hues appeared—blues, blue-grays, whites. Grays were used more than ever before, and more subtly, so that while his color was more reserved it was also more alive. And it was better related to form and space; we can see him striving to make light and atmosphere model forms. His handling was freer, but governed by a delicate precision. The foundation was still a pencil drawing, swift and keen. The technique was much more transparent, the white of the paper playing an important part; gouache had been almost entirely discarded. Execution was not always up to intention; the washes were still thin, producing the effect of colored drawing more than full-bodied watercolor.

He had never been closer to impressionism than in these watercolors, with their emphasis on light and instantaneous effects, their harmonies of delicate grayed hues reminding one of the early works of Monet, Pissarro and Sisley. They were the most hopeful works he had done in watercolor. Gone was the feminine overneatness of his Houghton Farm style; he had broken this tight mold as he broke every mold throughout his life. After the darkness and opacity of his oils these watercolors were like a breath of fresh air. Studying nature intensely and with acuter observation, he had produced his most vigorous watercolors so far, and those that held most promise for future growth. It is significant that he did not attempt to work any of them up into finished compositions, but instead went on to new discoveries in watercolor.

Over a hundred watercolors and drawings of this summer were exhibited at Doll & Richards in Boston the following December—his first show in this gallery with which he was to be associated the rest of his life. They were well received and about a third of them were sold at prices around $50, netting him $1,400. This marked the beginning of his popularity in his native city. New York received them more coolly. About twenty, included

in the spring show of the Water Color Society, failed to arouse the enthusiasm his Houghton Farm work had. The critics linked them with Frank Currier's works as "impressionism," not then a complimentary word, and one wrote that they were "largely in the nature of guesses." But the *Nation* said: "Mr. Homer goes as far as any one has ever done in demonstrating the value of water-colors as a serious means of expressing dignified artistic impressions, and does it wholly in his own way. The visitor to the Academy will need to be reminded thus forcibly of the most interesting works in the display since otherwise it is probable that they would escape his observation altogether. They are hung . . . on the skyline, over doors and in corners, where it is perhaps possible to see them but where one would scarcely think of looking for them. The hanging committee, it may be observed in passing, look at water-color painting in a different way from Mr. Homer; . . . and people of taste and ill-nature will be sure to conceive him studiously ill-treated. Nevertheless, the drawings themselves will repay the neck-stretching discomfort involved in inspecting them." With rare foresight the reviewer ended: "Notwithstanding his considerable performance, it is what he will do hereafter, rather than what he has hitherto done, that one thinks of in connection with Mr. Homer's work."

IX

When the "New Movement" came in the late 1870's and the younger men returning from Munich and Paris with their modern ideas broke away from the Academy and founded the Society of American Artists, Homer took no part in the revolt, as did his old friends and fellow Academicians La Farge and Martin. He must have been asked to join the Society, as other independent Academicians were, but he neither joined it nor exhibited with it, continuing to show at the older institution and the Water Color Society.

At the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia, a landmark in the history of American art, he was well represented, and the official report by his friend John F. Weir singled him out for particular commendation. The Paris Universal Exposition of 1878 included four of his best paintings—*Snap the Whip, A Country School, A Visit from the Old Mistress,* and *Sunday Morn-*

ing in Virginia. The *Art Journal,* after remarking that the greatest defect of the American section was that it lacked a native flavor, went on: "The French critics commented with great surprise upon this peculiarity in the American Art department. Their interest was correspondingly great in the few works that reproduced scenes or characters from our national life. Thus the negro groups of Winslow Homer, the 'Corn-Husking' of Eastman Johnson, the 'Passing Show' of J. G. Brown, were all eagerly remarked, and received full notice and commendation. . . . Mr. Homer's pictures of negro life are exceedingly faithful and characteristic, but err by a too great hastiness and thinness of execution. Mr. Homer would probably have received a gold medal, I am told, had he sent more carefully-finished examples of his very real and decided talent."

As his work gained in skill and range, the critics became more favorable. One of his first works to be generally well received was *A Fair Wind* (pl. 11), shown at the Academy in 1876—a breezy oil of boys sailing off Gloucester, which, said one critic, was "settled upon by the artists as the author's greatest hit since the 'Confederate Prisoners.' " His watercolors met with earlier favor than his oils, especially, as we have seen, the finished feminine figures and the Houghton Farm scenes. In 1878 appeared the first full critical article on him, that by Sheldon in the *Art Journal.* His summing up still seems sound: "Mr. Homer is not wholly a master of *technique,* but he understands the nature and the aims of art; he can see and lay hold of the essentials of character, and he paints his own thoughts—not other persons'." This was followed by Sheldon's second article in the same periodical in 1880, and from this time on Homer's name began to appear frequently in magazines and art books.

The new attitude was not unmixed, and most critics still felt with Henry James that he was "damnably ugly." "Winslow Homer paints with an apparent unconsciousness of all schools of Art, and of every method other than his own," wrote the *Art Journal* in 1877. "No reputation, however authoritative, ever seems to reflect a tint upon his canvas, and no influence, however powerful, is seen to alter the sweep of his brush by a hair's-breadth. . . . He paints the life that he sees as he sees it; he never softens a line nor modifies a feature, nor yields for a moment to any soft seduction of beauty. He is

wholly in sympathy with the rude and uncouth conditions of American life; he likes the men, the women, the boys, and the girls, of the rustic by-ways of our land—and he likes them as they are, awkward in dress, spare in form, tanned and freckled by the sun, with no sensuous warmth, no dream of beauty." Even in 1880 S. G. W. Benjamin in his book *Art in America* considered him a somewhat dangerous character: "It is to the eccentric and altogether original compositions of Winslow Homer that we turn for a more decided expression of the growing weariness of our people with the conventional, and a vague yearning after an original form of art speech. The freshness, the crudity, and the solid worth of American civilization are well typified in the thoroughly native art of Mr. Homer. No artist has shown more versatility and inventiveness in choice of subject, and greater impatience with accepted methods. Impatience, irritability, is written upon all his works —he is evidently striving after the unknown. . . . In his reach after striking subjects or compositions he not rarely borders on the sensational. But in some of his masterly water-color sketches, which are almost impressionist in treatment, . . . Mr. Homer asserts his right to be considered the founder of a new school of *genre* painting."

Neither praise nor blame from critics seems to have had much effect on Homer's art. But that he was not insensitive to it is indicated by his friend Augustus Stonehouse: "He is the author of the complaint attributed to many others, 'For fifteen years the press has called me "a promising young artist," and I am tired of it.' For Mr. Homer has a dry, thin humor entirely individual, which rarely turns unkind, a humor reserved for his intimates and seldom permitted to enter into his painted work."

We have seen that from the first he sold most of his important oils, though at modest prices. With the growing maturity of his work he began to ask more. At the National Academy of 1874 his paintings had been priced at $200 and $300; next year they ranged from $400 up to $1,000, remaining at this level for the next two years. Only a few sales resulted. But the biggest raise was in 1879, when, probably relying on his increasing reputation, he asked $1,500 each for three pictures—and failed to sell any of them. Next year prices were reduced to from $300 to $800, but the returns were little better. Of the chief oils of these years, when he was doing his best work

so far, only about a third were sold at the time, the balance remaining on his hands until years later, including some of his finest pictures—*The Two Guides, A Visit from the Old Mistress, The Carnival, Camp Fire, Upland Cotton, Shepherdess of Houghton Farm.*

These were of course asking prices; what he actually received we have no way of knowing. One indication may be that *Uncle Ned at Home,* originally priced at $600, fetched $215 when he put it in an auction in 1879. One of the few firsthand records of his business dealings at this time is a letter to Lawson Valentine about *A Fair Wind* in April 1876: "I am very much obliged to you for noticing my picture at the Academy & expressing a wish to buy it. Take my advice and don't do it. I am about to paint much better pictures & will give you a chance at them. If the 'Fair Wind' comes home to me from the Academy I shall be glad to sell it to you at a reduced price, but as it stands now it must bring me the price in the catalogue to have it pay me for three years work. The price $850 would be reduced by commission & frame—

$85	
55	
$140	$850
	140
Little enough	$710

"P. S. I shall come down for beans on Wednesday."

At the John Taylor Johnston sale in December 1876, *Prisoners from the Front* was bought by Samuel P. Avery for $1,800—the sixth highest price for an American picture in the sale, those higher being mostly famous works by older artists, such as Church's huge *Niagara Falls,* which went for $12,500. Homer of course gained nothing from this except prestige. The price was probably due more to its historic than its artistic interest, for three years later his equally fine *Snap the Whip* fetched only $560 at the John H. Sherwood sale, while *A Country School* went for $420 and *Weaning the Calf* for $290.

His watercolors found a steady sale at low prices. In the spring of 1878 he auctioned about fifty watercolors and drawings in Boston, but times were

bad and they did not bring much. In March 1880, instead of sending to the Water Color Society, he held a sale at the Mathews Art Gallery in New York of about seventy-five watercolors and drawings, which went for five to fifty dollars apiece, realizing a total of $1,050, which the press called "very successful." About this time he took a group of watercolors and drawings out to Chicago, where an exhibition and auction were held. Prices were very low, and the venture was far from a success.

The failure to sell more than a few of the best oils he had painted must have been discouraging. "My recollection of Homer at that time," James Kelly recalled, "is that he was cheerful and in high spirits, although I have since heard that during that period he was undergoing a great struggle, as he found no market for his work, and that his brother, unknown to him, occasionally bought his paintings to give him encouragement." Once when Kelly's father called at his studio, Homer "grew quite confidential, and told my father of his struggles, and how he received no recognition until he was over forty." "There were times and seasons," Augustus Stonehouse wrote, "when he announced to his friends with great bitterness and the utmost solemnity that he proposed to abandon art for business. Indeed there was one period when, so far as the present writer knows, Mr. Homer did retire from active work and sulk in some far-off tent. Doubtless the rest so gained from the disheartening struggle was ultimately of benefit to him in more senses than one."

An antisocial tendency that was to grow with the years had already begun to manifest itself. Said a magazine in August 1879: "Of Mr. Winslow Homer's movements in summer-time no person however intimate is ever supposed to have the secret, and the present season is not made an exception." In 1880 another writer, who had probably just had the studio door slammed in his face, complained: "He is pose in the extreme, and affects eccentricities of manner that border upon gross rudeness. To visit him in his studio, is literally bearding a lion in his den; for Mr. Homer's strength as an artist is only equalled by his roughness when he does not happen to be in just the humor of being approached."

"As Homer's fame extended," Kelly wrote, "he was so bothered with sight-seers who invaded his studio, that he had to stand at bay; he would

hardly open his door in response to a knock, and when he did, he would open it for a few inches, as he at first did to me—and the chances were that he would make some excuse not to let you in. His desire for solitude grew upon him, to which his friends gradually became reconciled; instead of resenting, they accepted his moods and left him alone. Many stories were told of his methods of defense." Gilbert Gaul told Kelly one: "I remember a man coming to our studio, who asked for Homer. I said, 'Go down to the end of the hall'; and he came back saying he could not find it. 'Did you go to the end of the hall?' 'Yes, but that is the coal bin.' Later I went down, and saw hanging on Homer's door a sign on which was painted 'Coal Bin.' I saw Homer next day, and asked him what it meant. 'Oh,' he said, 'my father sent word that he was coming down yesterday, and I put up that sign so that he wouldn't find me.' " Abbey, meeting Homer at a reception and being invited to call, said he would drop in next morning. "He did so," wrote Kelly, "and in response to 'Come in!' he entered. Looking from behind his canvas, Homer said, 'Ah, Abbey, is that you? I just wanted to see who it was. I'm sorry I can't see you now; I'm too busy—good day!' Then he went on with his work, and Abbey left. This was such a good one that Abbey had to tell it."

X

His late thirties and early forties were for Homer a period of experimentation. Youth's first instinctive phase was past, and he was now consciously working out new ways of seeing and painting. With each new step he did not remain satisfied for long, but went on to fresh discoveries. The result was a greater variety of subjects and styles than ever before, not always easy to reconcile, but all manifestations of a driving energy that was seeking its proper path. Certain fundamental conflicts in his temperament had come to the fore—between the feminine and masculine strains, between simple naturalism and conscious composition—conflicts that had to be resolved before he could attain full maturity. But throughout he had shown an extraordinary capacity for growth.

By the beginning of the 1880's he had made a reputation as one of the outstanding American genre painters, though still considered uncouth by

many. He had reached an age when most artists settle down to repeating what they have said before. But at forty-five his greatest growth was about to begin. Within the next few years his art was to change fundamentally and he was to embark on the work on which his fame rests.

V

ENGLAND

In the spring of 1881, when he was forty-five, Homer made his second trip abroad. This time he went to England, settling near Tynemouth in Northumberland, on the North Sea at the mouth of "the coaly Tyne," eight miles from Newcastle. In the nearby fishing village of Cullercoats he took a little cottage with a garden surrounded by a high wall and a gate that could be locked, assuring privacy; and here he lived alone, even doing his own cooking. Two seasons were spent here, with some travelling down the East Coast. He may have returned to America in the winter of 1881 to 1882, but he was back in England that spring and remained until November 1882.

Tynemouth was a watering place and fishing port—a picturesque spot, with cliffs overlooking the North Sea and a fine beach where the fishermen brought in their boats. "Nowhere on our coasts are storms more frequent or more terrible," said an English writer in 1883. "I have seen a large steamer strike the end of the pier and break in two pieces like a splinter struck with an adze. In one night, four or five years ago, fourteen vessels went ashore between darkness and dawn. Yet the pier and its companion on South Shields have made the river so much safer of approach than in years past that it is called a harbor of refuge. To see vessels running for safety where the waves seem to be miles long is to have a terribly vivid idea of the dangers of those who 'go down to the sea in ships.' When a heavy wave breaks against Tynemouth Pier it seems to leap up into the clouds. . . . In the history of maritime adventure is recorded no more pleasing narrative than that which tells how these towns at the mouth of the Tyne, where so much life was lost, originated the two great systems of saving it—South Shields the Life-Boat, and North Shields the Volunteer Life Brigade. The Life Brigade house stands on the cliffs near the head of the pier. On stormy nights a great fire burns in the grate; and brown-bearded fishermen from Cullercoats and brave shop-keepers from Shields—clad in sea-boots and guernseys and sou'-westers, with their life-belts close to their hands—lounge in groups at the hearth or stand looking out into the storm, ready, whenever the guns of the

Castor are heard, to leap into their boat and for other lives do battle with the perilous sea."

The Northumbrian fisherfolk, of part Scandinavian blood, were a hardy race. When the men brought in their heavy snub-nosed boats after the day's fishing, their women and children were waiting for them on the beach, and after the men had plodded wearily home the women unloaded the catch, carried it to market and got the boats ready for another day. These women were a new type to Homer—sturdy creatures capable of a man's work, blond, strongly Nordic, ruddy from outdoor life, handsome in their robust way. They played a leading part in all his English work; the men hardly appeared in it. In scores of watercolors he showed them waiting on the beach for their menfolk, babies in shawls on their backs; unloading boats and carrying baskets of fish up the beach; mending nets; standing on the cliffs gazing out to sea for the sails of the fishing fleet. His fashionable young ladies were things of the past, as well as his delicacy of sentiment and his concern with individual character. These women attracted him by their robust, Junoesque comeliness, their hardihood and courage, what might be called their manly virtues. His attitude towards women had changed from intimate sentiment to a viewpoint more impersonal and sublimated. A similar change appeared in other aspects of his subjects. His idyllic rustic themes gave way to scenes of hard physical labor and of danger—men and women battling for their livelihood against the powerful and treacherous sea. There was a new feeling for the peril of the sea, for the drama of man's struggle against it, and a new concept of an heroic type of humanity.

His first work at Tynemouth, as at Gloucester the preceding summer, was almost entirely in watercolor and drawing, and evidently direct from nature. As before he repeated over and over the same type of subject, as if exercising his eye and hand. He later told John W. Beatty that he had worked very hard at this period. This discipline soon began to tell. His first watercolors continued his Gloucester style, but soon a new mastery appeared. His figures lost any trace of woodenness and took on a new flexibility and motion; they became larger in form, rounder, more solid. His command of watercolor technique grew rapidly. His work ceased to be colored drawing and became full-fledged watercolor. The former thinness disappeared, and

the washes acquired body and strength. He began to realize the resources of the medium, securing whites not only by the virgin white of the paper but by washing out the color with a wet brush and "lifting" it or by scraping with a knife, always keeping the medium transparent. This new feeling for the refinements of the craft may have been partly due to seeing English watercolor painting, with its ripe perfection of technique; but this remains a speculation, for we do not know what he saw and liked in English art, or whether he looked at it at all.

A more indisputable influence was the English climate, with its moisture-laden air, cloud-filled skies and soft gray light. Sunlight was no longer emphasized, and in the diffused light the sharp edges and flat tones of his American work gave way to a more rounded modelling. The tonality was more sombre than in any of his earlier watercolors. The grays of his Gloucester style still predominated, but with a fuller body of tone, while new strong sober hues created harmonies of a depth and ripeness he had never attained before. The stormy, changeable climate of the North Sea brought him a new sensibility to weather. Where previously the weather in his pictures had always seemed static, now it became dynamic. Wind was no longer a gentle breeze but a gale; the sky no longer blank but a moving spectacle of clouds, now threatening, now clearing; the sea no longer the quiet water of Gloucester harbor but a tempestuous element. There was a new sense of movement in wind and cloud and wave, and of the drama of nature's changing moods.

In all aspects of his art appeared a new maturity. Looking back over the previous few years we can see that this remarkable growth had been accompanied by hard, disciplined work. At Houghton Farm, Gloucester and Tynemouth he had concentrated on watercolor, working directly from nature, painting the same themes over and over, not attempting to produce complete pictures so much as to develop his ability to see and record. During these years he had produced comparatively few oils. This training, now bearing fruit in his watercolors, was soon to show in his oils.

Towards the end of his first season in England he attempted several larger watercolors, more ambitious in subject and more deliberately composed. One of the first was inspired by the wreck of the ship *Iron Crown* in late

October, which he witnessed. Here was no everyday theme but, for the first time since his illustrating days, a consciously dramatic one. It was followed by others—*Mending Nets* (pl. 20), *The Incoming Tide, Inside the Bar, Tynemouth* (pl. 22), *A Voice from the Cliffs* (pl. 21), *A Scotch Mist*—all planned compositions, as distinct from the on-the-spot sketches of his first English summer. Most of them were finished after his return to America but based on his English sketches. *Scotch Mist,* for example, was made up of figures and landscape from two watercolors and two drawings. These were the most carefully designed and finished works he had done in watercolor, as complete as his oils.

In these later watercolors the Tynemouth fisherwomen, who in earlier sketches had been seen as objectively as his Gloucester boys, were more idealized. They were still fishwives, but they had taken on an heroic and statuesque character. Their figures had a new monumentality and a more studied linear rhythm. In *A Voice from the Cliffs* he must have carefully thought out the relations between the three figures; note how the lines of the center girl's arms are echoed by those of the girls on either side. In *Inside the Bar* the woman's figure is sculptural, the lines of her blown apron giving a sense of movement like the garments of a Nike. The same linear beauty appears in *Scotch Mist,* which with its grayed, severely simplified color scheme, shows an element of abstraction new in Homer's work, reminding one of an artist one would never associate with him—Puvis de Chavannes. These pictures revealed a new awareness of design in the human body, a new largeness of form, a new aesthetic intent.

The change was not altogether for the better. With all their virtues these watercolors had lost the freshness and utter authenticity of his direct-from-nature work. The style was more labored, the poses more studied, the grouping more obviously deliberate, and the general spirit more sentimentalized and rhetorical. Individual figures were imposing, but the composition as a whole was conventional, without much sensitiveness to plastic relations. One feels that it may have been the result of external ideas of how to compose a picture, and one wonders whether he had been looking at academic English painting. Conscious design was still new to him, and he had not yet learned to reconcile it with direct naturalistic vision, and to achieve a

kind of design more personal and vital. And yet these works were more mature than any previous ones.

Four of his chief English watercolors, shown at the American Water Color Society in 1883, brought the most enthusiastic public response he had received. Even his severest critics, who had thought his American work crude and ugly, were won over. Among the critiques was the most appreciative study of his art that had yet appeared, a special article by Margaret G. Van Rensselaer in the *Century*, in which she said: " 'The Voice from the Cliffs' and 'Inside the Bar' seem to me not only the most complete and beautiful things he has yet produced, but among the most interesting American art has yet created. . . . Mr. Homer does indeed, in these pictures, show something quite different from the fresh and individual but crude and unpoetic suggestiveness of his earlier aquarelles. . . . The dignity of these landscapes and the statuesque impressiveness and sturdy vigor of these figures, translated by the strong sincerity of his brush, prove an originality of mood, a vigor of conception, and a sort of stern poetry of feeling to which he had never reached before."

II

Only a few oils resulted from his English stay, but they included the most ambitious so far. *Early Evening,* painted in 1881, was like his watercolors in subject—two fishergirls standing on a cliff against the sky, while an old salt looks out to sea. There is no record of his having exhibited it, and it remained in his studio for years. To 1882 belonged *Hark! the Lark,* three girls carrying baskets and nets, pausing to listen and gaze upwards—one of his most consciously poetic themes. Both these oils were larger and more highly finished than most of his work up to that time. They had the conventional composition and the touch of sentimentality that marked his large watercolors. Their handling was tight and their color still dark and warm, without the luminosity of his watercolors. He himself evidently considered *Hark! the Lark* his best achievement to date, for he chose it to exhibit at the Royal Academy in the summer of 1882, and the following year he painted a watercolor replica, *A Voice from the Cliffs.* In a letter in 1902 he said: "Only once in the last thirty years have I made a duplicate, and that

was a watercolor from my oil picture now owned by the Layton Art Gallery, Milwaukee, called 'Hark! the Lark.' It is the most important picture I ever painted, and the very best one, as the figures are large enough to have some expression in their faces." (This, incidentally, was only one of several pictures he declared from time to time to be his best.)

Of the oils of English subjects the most ambitious was *The Coming Away of the Gale,* shown at the National Academy in 1883. No contemporary reproduction of it has been found, but it was fully described by the critics, in the leisurely style of the day. A wide sweep of angry gray sea; a gray stormy sky; in the foreground a young fisherwoman with her baby on her back striding along the shore, bracing herself against the gale; in the background a lifesaving station and a group of men preparing to launch a lifeboat. From the descriptions this was evidently his most dramatic painting up to that time. But if he expected to repeat the success of his watercolors he must have been disappointed. While it was generally admitted to be one of the features of the exhibition, the critics all took exception to it, though for quite different reasons. One complained of "its hard drawing and its theatrical arrangement of figures and accessories. . . . It would be impossible for anyone not to know that there was a gale somewhere around here, but for the same reason that you know it is present on the stage. Simply, that is, because you are told so, not because you feel it." But to another "the only element of success in it is the suggestion of the storm laden atmosphere and the troubled aspect of the sea." The only points on which all agreed were that it was a "disappointment" and that in comparison with his watercolors it was theatrical and forced. The critic of the *Sun* dismissed it with: "The figures are clumsily drawn; the color is cold and ugly, but natural enough; the composition is nil. It is a picture which will not add to Mr. Homer's fame."

With all his independence, this reception of his most ambitious painting must have been a blow to Homer. He did not exhibit it again, as far as is known.

Ten years later at the World's Fair in Chicago one of the most admired paintings was Homer's *A Great Gale* (pl. 23), dated 1893, just acquired by Thomas B. Clarke. At the Clarke sale in 1899 it was to fetch a good price,

and its purchase in 1916 by the Worcester Museum for around $30,000 was to establish a record high for an American painting. Its chief elements correspond with the description of *The Coming Away of the Gale,* except that the lifesavers and their boat are missing. But examination with X-ray, ultraviolet light and microscope reveals that the sea has been completely repainted, and underneath is the porch of the Tynemouth lifesaving station and a dark shape that might well be a boat and figures. The repainting, in fresh blues, greens and whites with bold brushstrokes, is characteristic of Homer's style of the early 1890's; while the unrepainted parts are in the dark gray-brown tone and tight brushwork of his English period. It is evident that Homer, economical Yankee that he was, had not scrapped the earlier painting but had livened it up, redated it and sold it to Clarke. The difference in the public receptions in 1883 and 1893 throws an ironical sidelight on the vagaries of public taste.

Looking at the picture today one feels that the strictures of the early critics were to some extent justified. There is a touch of melodrama in it, a banality in the woman's figure and the posterlike way it is silhouetted against the sea. As storytelling it was one of his most effective works to date, but compared to the genuineness of his more informal English watercolors, it makes one feel that he had forced the dramatic note before his taste was developed enough to handle it.

In spite of the reception of his oils, he could not but be satisfied with that of his watercolors. It is true that among the large ones, which were priced at $500 and $300, only *A Voice from the Cliffs* and one or two others found immediate purchasers; but at an exhibition at Doll & Richards in December 1883, twenty out of fifty smaller watercolors were sold at prices around $100 to $150, netting him almost $2,400.

In every way the Tynemouth experience marked a turningpoint in Homer's career. It brought him into close contact with the sea, henceforth his dominant theme. It witnessed a phenomenal maturing in mind and vision. It resulted in a long step forward in technical mastery. It brought him his greatest critical acclaim and his most solid financial rewards up to that time. And it settled in his mind the kind of life he wanted to lead and the kind of art he wanted to produce.

VI

THE EIGHTEEN-EIGHTIES

On the Maine coast ten miles below Portland a rocky peninsula, Prout's Neck, juts out into the Atlantic. From its cliffs one looks down at blue water on three sides—on the west, Saco Bay; on the south and east, the open sea. It stands fully exposed to easterly storms, and in such weather the surf breaks magnificently against its cliffs. Like all the Maine coast it has the look of having put up a stout fight against the sea for centuries, its gray rocks worn into rugged shapes and lying about like the debris of some primeval explosion, its bushes gnarled by the sea wind, every foot of it weatherbeaten and full of a tough, dramatic character lacking in the milder coast further south. Back from the shore lie high moors covered with bay, juniper and huckleberry, and the heights are crowned by a grove of tall pines, among which one could believe oneself miles inland were it not for the gulls flying overhead and the sound and smell of the sea.

Today Prout's Neck is an exclusive summer resort, but in the 1880's only a few fishermen and farmers were living there, on the sheltered side away from the ocean. One or two primitive boardinghouses took in city people, but there were no summer houses. Old photographs show the place much bleaker than today, the moors bare of the luxuriant undergrowth that now covers them.

It was in this lonely spot that Homer was to live the rest of his life. This was not a sudden decision. The Homer family had visited Prout's Neck as early as 1875, and Winslow had been there several summers before he went to England. In 1882 his brother Arthur built a cottage and at the same time Charles bought a big house that had been started near the shore, and completed it as a place where his father and mother could summer. Winslow was to live there too, using a room on the top floor as his studio, which he did the first season, that of 1883. But his mother had only one summer in her new home. She died in Brooklyn on April 27th, 1884. Ten days later, arriving in Maine, Homer wrote Charles' wife: "I went into the house at Prout's today. Found it in good order. Thought of Mother with a certain

amount of pleasure, thank the Lord. I knew that if possible she was with me. I feel quite well for the first time in two weeks." He also said: "I think Die Meistersinger by Wagner is about as good as any Old Master. I heard it last night."

That summer Winslow, rebelling at working in the big house with his father, took over Charles' stable, a small square mansard-roofed building, moved it away from the house, and altered it to live in. On the second floor he built a covered porch facing out to sea and up the coast, "braced so as to hold a complete Sunday school picknick." From here, high above the water, he could look up and down the shore and over a great expanse of ocean, with Strattan and Bluff Islands lying a mile or so out. To stand on this porch, in the open and at the same time under shelter, looking down on the water, was like being on a ship's bridge. Here he used to spend hours walking up and down and observing the sea—"wearing out the balcony," his brothers said.

From this time on Prout's Neck was his permanent home, and he spent most of the year there. Winters he would occasionally visit Boston or New York or go south, but never for more than a few months; and some years he stayed the whole winter. After his father and brothers had left he would be absolutely alone, his nearest neighbors a few fishermen and farmers over on the landward side of the Neck. But as he wrote Charles one September: "I like my home more than ever as people thin out." A few miles north was the little village of Scarboro, with its post office and its station on the railway between Portland and Boston—his only link with the outside world.

What lay behind this withdrawal from society was something that Homer never divulged. Sometimes he said that he left New York to escape jury duty—a characteristic piece of leg-pulling. Lack of financial success in New York, and the cool reception of *The Coming Away of the Gale* probably played a part. A paper of the time reported: "Boston is the only city that has given Winslow Homer any practical encouragement; he has found New York so bad a market for his work that he has left that city, not to return, and has retired to Maine, where he proposes to live, not far from Portland. He will paint on to please himself, and occasionally give exhibitions of his work in Boston, where, alone in the United States, some kind of practical

encouragement is given him." Alden Weir used to tell of finding Homer in his studio on Tenth Street with a pile of his watercolors and drawings on the floor. Asked what he was doing, he said: "I've been offered $500 for a hundred drawings and paintings, and these are the ones I've picked out. When I get the money for them I'm going to leave New York for good!"

Aside from such considerations, his move seems an inevitable result of his whole character and growth. Even in his greatest sociability there had been a deep-seated reserve. He had always disliked the city, had loved nature as much as man. His antisocial traits had been growing with the years, and were doubtless intensified by his unhappy love affair. But it would be wrong to assume that his withdrawal from society held any great element of defeat or bitterness. His intimate letters give ample evidence that he loved Maine and the life he led there, and that it gave him a deeper satisfaction than any kind of life he had led before.

Some temperaments need solitude to bring out their full powers. As Emerson said, "Solitude, the safeguard of mediocrity, is to genius the stern friend, the cold, obscure shelter, where moult the wings which will bear it farther than suns and stars." Unable to learn from others, having to create a style of his own in direct contact with nature, Homer must have felt the necessity of working absolutely alone. At Gloucester and Tynemouth he had had a taste of such isolation and relished it. He must have realized that he stood on the threshold of his greatest development as an artist. He knew now what he cared for most—the wild and elemental in nature, the things least touched by man—the sea, the forest, the mountains. And he knew how he must live in order to paint these things.

II

From the time he settled in Maine Homer's subjects changed. Women, who had played so large a part in his work up to then, appeared less and less frequently. The world of childhood disappeared completely, and all the pastoral side of country life. His dominant themes became the sea and the wilderness, and the men who inhabited them and wrested their living from them. He was celebrating the masculine virtues of physical strength

and courage pitted against the forces of nature. His style likewise lost its elements of femininity and sweetness, and became more harsh, vigorous and masculine. In a sense all of this was an escape from modern society with its complexity and sophistication. But while other artists escaped into the past or into subjective dreams, Homer characteristically remained faithful to actual life, but in its most elemental aspects. He was still the naturalist, but one whose preference for the primitive revealed a deep undercurrent of romanticism.

His interest in the sea, awakened at Tynemouth, produced its chief results after he settled in Maine. For several years his principal theme was to be the perils of the sea. Part of the summer of 1883 he spent in Atlantic City, where he made friends with a lifesaving crew and got them to demonstrate the use of the breeches buoy in making rescues from wrecks. The fruit of these researches was *The Life Line* (pl. 24), an oil finished early in the following year, representing an unconscious woman, supported by a seaman, being pulled to shore above mountainous waves. Some of the work on it was done on the roof of the Tenth Street Studios, where he posed his models, a big mulatto man and his sister, occasionally drenching them with a dipper of water from a tub.

This was his most dramatic painting so far. *The Coming Away of the Gale* had shown the spectators of a drama which was taking place, so to speak, off-stage; but *The Life Line* pictured the drama itself. The long rhythm of the breakers, the violent bursts of spray, the precarious movement of the two human beings suspended over this turmoil, the effect of the gale tearing at them and driving the waves, had a force such as he had never attained before. The color was still sombre, but the varied gray-greens and slate-grays of water and sky formed an austere harmony, evidently carefully planned, that was his most effective achievement in color up to that time. Altogether, the picture showed a phenomenal gain in maturity over his oils before he went to England. It was the fruition of the long discipline to which he had subjected himself for six years, working in watercolor, constantly enlarging his powers of vision and execution.

Even in this most heroic of his works, he had not abandoned the feminine motif, for the main theme was the rescue of a woman and the central element

was her unconscious figure. Young and handsome, of his favorite blond type, her robust body fully revealed in her wet, clinging clothes, she was a figure designed to arouse not only pity but admiration. As the roguish critic of the New York *Times* wrote when the picture was first seen: "She is a buxom lassie, by no means ill-favored in figure and face. . . . Mr. Homer has done the very unusual thing of uniting cleverness of conception and good composition with a sensuousness, a feeling for physical beauty in the woman's form, which is none the less admirable because, true as it is, it will not shock the most decorous." A curious feature was the way the seaman's face was hidden by a scarf blown across it, although in the first drawing it was fully visible—a pose more effective than the confusing one in the oil. Mrs. Van Rensselaer commended the artist for this device, as not distracting attention from the woman; but one wonders whether, in picturing a man with his arms around a woman's body, some strange modesty had made him hide the man's face.

Exhibited at the National Academy in the spring of 1884, *The Life Line* was one of the most popular paintings, and unlike *The Coming Away of the Gale,* received almost unanimous praise from the critics, although Charles F. Ulrich's *In the Land of Promise,* a scene on Ellis Island, was generally rated the key picture of the show. For the first time the word "masterpiece" was freely used; under the heading, "A Masterpiece," the *Herald* called it "perhaps the best figure painting, looked at all around, in the exhibition." On the opening day it was bought for $2,500 by Catharine Lorillard Wolfe—the first American work to enter her famous collection. The *Herald* commented: "This purchase shows that the tide is turning, and our richer collectors are beginning to patronize American as well as foreign art. It has hitherto been—in this city at least—to the possessors of moderate means that the American artist has looked for patronage. The Homer is well fitted to rank with the foreign paintings in Miss Wolfe's superb collection, and she deserves the thanks of all friends of American art for this spontaneous recognition of the great talents of one of the strongest and most thoroughly American of the figure painters."

Like *Prisoners from the Front, The Life Line* was a landmark in Homer's reputation. Thenceforth, although individual pictures might be coldly received, there was never any question of his importance.

III

In watercolor his first summer at Prout's Neck, that of 1883, brought forth many studies of rocks and surf. Sometimes appeared fishergirls of the Tynemouth type, looking somehow unreal in this new setting. In these works he was striving, with the technical skill he had acquired in England, to catch the clearer air and stronger sunlight of America. The dark grays of his English style gave way to a blonder key, with cool blues in the water that were new in his work. There was something tentative about these essays, as if his awareness of the range of outdoor color had outgrown his ability to picture it, but they contained the germs of much of his later painting. They were his first attempts at what was to be his most frequent theme—pure seascape. Not for seven years was he to attack such subjects in oil, and not for twelve were his oils to reach this high key. One sketch of this summer bore fruit twenty years later in his famous *Early Morning after a Storm at Sea.*

In December 1884 he sailed for the Bahamas, going first to Nassau, where he stayed about two months, with trips to neighboring islands such as Eleuthera and Harbor Island. These enchanted islands had not yet become tourist resorts, and he was the first American artist of any note to paint there. It was his first view of the tropics—the powerful sun, the unbelievable blues of the Gulf Stream, white limestone houses and roads, palms and oranges and aloes, and above all, the negro inhabitants—stately negresses balancing baskets of fruit on their heads, fishing boats crowded with cheerful families, black Apollos diving for conches, mahogany bodies and gaudy clothes against white walls and blue water—a pagan world, warm and barbaric.

Here he painted a series of watercolors, his gayest so far. In them he returned to simple, direct naturalism. The storytelling, the heroic tone, the darkness of his recent work disappeared, burnt up by the tropical sun. Confronted with this completely new milieu he threw overboard all traces of conventionalism and reacted freshly to the reality before his eyes. These impressions of a happy primitive world were filled with a holiday spirit he had not shown since his paintings of childhood. After the gray sombreness of a Maine winter his first sight of the Bahamas opened up a new world of light and color. Not that these first West Indian subjects were brilliant by

modern standards or compared to what he was to do later. He did not at once discard grays. Tropical sunlight as he pictured it was a pervading white light without glare or heat. His color became not so much brilliant as luminous. Whites played a larger part, all hues became clearer, and even grays were more delicate and silvery. Here and there a bolder passage full of an earthy sensuousness gave a foretaste of his later style, but these notes were only occasional as yet. Still retaining some of the character of colored drawings, these works were not yet built fully in terms of color, but they marked a great advance; for the first time he was consistently maintaining a high key.

His drawing was swifter, surer in catching movement. In contrast to his statuesque English fishergirls, the figures of these negroes were full of action, their attitudes free and natural, their character captured with unerring accuracy. In the three half-naked negroes in *Conch Divers* (pl. 26), in the superb torso of the black man in *Shark Fishing* (pl. 26), he revealed a mastery of the figure remarkable in one who had never attempted the nude. The handling was at once freer and firmer. The sloppiness of execution in his Gloucester work, the traces of laboriousness in his English watercolors, were gone; the brushwork was crisp and controlled. Occasionally he attempted a looseness close to impressionism, the color applied in swift strokes without finish, aiming only at the chief masses of tone.

The steamships that called at Nassau southward bound went on around the east end of Cuba. After about two months in Nassau Homer moved on to Santiago de Cuba. This ancient Spanish city lying on a magnificent mountainous coast, with its great harbor, its picturesque streets and houses, and its mixture of former grandeur and present squalor, made an instant appeal to him. He wrote Charles back in New York: "Here I am fixed for a month, having taken tickets for N. Y. on 8th, leaving 27th of March. This is a redhot place full of soldiers. They have just condemned six men to be shot for landing with arms, & from all accounts they deserve it. The first day sketching I was ordered to move on until the crowds dispersed. Now I have a pass from the Mayor 'forbidding all agents to interfere with me when following my profession.' I expect some fine things—it is certainly the richest field for an artist that I have seen.

"You talk very poor up North. Why do you not sell your horses & buy

one from Nassau for 60 that will beat any that you have for going over the road, they eat anything they can get & have never seen an oat. Lucky Father did not go with me. No breakfast until 11, very bad smells, no drains, brick tiles & scorpions for floor & so hot that you must change your clothes every afternoon. I will be very glad to get home."

Many of his Cuban watercolors were of the city, its steep streets and old Spanish houses with walls of mellow ochre and terracotta, red tile roofs and shuttered windows. The precise rendering of detail, even the intricate designs of wrought-iron balconies, made them resemble architect's drawings. Their color had a subdued sumptuousness—ochre, saffron, pale gold, salmon-pink, mauve, gray-blue, violet. They lacked the gaiety of his Nassau watercolors, seeming more the work of a tourist, somewhat daunted by this ancient civilization as he had not been by the primitive life of the Bahamas.

There was little in common between these West Indian watercolors and his sea paintings of this time. The unpretentious naturalism of the watercolors, their spontaneity and luminosity, contrasted in every way with the heroic themes, gray sobriety and studied composition of the oils. The oils were a continuation of his English style; the watercolors were a new departure. They were the first indications of a dawning phase of naturalism, when, having outgrown both the naïveté of his youth and the conventionalism of his middle age, he would picture the external world with a vigor that was to grow through the years. The awakening of his color sense that came to him in the West Indies was to last the rest of his life. But its effects were not to be felt in his oils until some years later—a lag between the two mediums which can be traced throughout his career. Two themes recorded on this 1885 trip were to take shape in paintings long afterwards. A sketch of sharks hovering around a dismasted sailboat was the germ of *The Gulf Stream* of 1899, and a drawing of Morro Castle at Santiago resulted in *Searchlight, Harbor Entrance* of 1901.

As far as we know Homer did not return to the Bahamas for fourteen years. The following January, 1886, found him in Florida, where he spent a month or so with his father fishing but finding time to paint several watercolors of the swampland with its quiet water and impenetrable luxuriance of palms and oaks and Spanish moss. Like his Nassau works in their silvery

luminosity, they captured the moist, lazy air, the warm stillness, the rich decay of the jungle. Another series of Florida watercolors was done in early 1890, but the next not until 1899, though he may have gone there other years for fishing.

A large group of Nassau and Cuba watercolors was exhibited at the galleries of Gustav Reichard in New York in December 1885 and at Doll & Richards in Boston the following February. Neither show got as much attention from the critics as had his English works at the Water Color Society. The comment as a whole was favorable, but the critics failed to recognize the significance of this new phase, while the people who had liked his English style and expected him to continue it must have been disconcerted. But Homer was never one to capitalize a success by repeating it; he always kept well ahead of his public.

IV

Some time during 1884 he must have taken a trip with a fishing fleet, for dated that year were a number of drawings of herring and mackerel fishing on the high seas, men in dories hauling in nets and baiting trawls, schooners rolling in the ground swell. These drawings are the only record of the trip, and what port he sailed from and where he went and how long he stayed, are unknown. This experience resulted in a group of paintings of deep-sea fishing in the following two years—*The Fog Warning* and *The Herring Net*, 1885, *Lost on the Grand Banks*, 1885-1886, and *Eight Bells*, 1886. Less dramatic than *The Life Line*, they pictured the daily life and work of those who earn their living on the sea.

In painting *The Fog Warning*, originally called simply *Halibut Fishing*, he propped a dory up on a sand dune at an angle as if it were going over a wave, and got one of his Prout's Neck neighbors, Henry Lee, a fisherman, to don oilskins and sit in it. It was a cold day when they began, but the artist went to the well, drew a pail of water and threw it over his model. "You never heard such profanity in your life," said a witness.

The Fog Warning has always been one of his most popular works. This picture of a bearded fisherman alone in a dory on the vast waste of waters at nightfall, turning to look at a rising fog bank and gauge his distance from

his schooner, has summed up for the public the hard, courageous lives of the Banks fishermen. In it Homer attained a new degree of competence. The form and motion of the waves and the way the boat is balanced on them were pictured with sure proficiency, while the light and color of late afternoon, the dark cold sea, the warm sky reflected in the waves, the man's head silhouetted dark against it, were handled with a kind of skill in representing appearances that he had never reached before. It was his ablest piece of painting so far, and the logical result of his years of striving for naturalistic truth.

In more purely artistic qualities, however, he had lost much. Gone was the naïve freshness of vision that had marked his earlier years. The hard-boiled competence, the overinsistent details, the banality of vision, and the lack of any redeeming sensuous appeal, showed that he had achieved naturalistic skill at the expense of the instinctive qualities that made his early work attractive, with all its crudities. He had mastered the problems of representation with which he had been consciously absorbed, but had temporarily lost contact with his unconscious artistic sense. *The Fog Warning* was unrelieved photographic naturalism. Moreover, it lacked the pictorial drama of *The Life Line*, for its storytelling elements—the danger of the approaching fog and the distance of the schooner—did not lend themselves to plastic treatment as did the purely physical action of the earlier picture.

In *The Herring Net* (pl. 28) he chose a subtler light and weather—a hazy day at sea, mist almost concealing distant schooners and filling the sky with rose-gray vapor, against which the forms of two men in a dory loom dark, while a high sun breaks through the murk to reflect on the water and the glittering fish in the net—a peculiar atmospheric effect, accurately captured. The technique is more complex than usual, and the solidly painted boat and figures stand out in strong relief against the opalescent glazed tones of sea and sky. The light models the forms more roundly than in *The Fog Warning* and the haze creates a closer relation between foreground and background. While there is little to choose between the two pictures in essential plastic values, *The Herring Net* is a finer achievement in color and tone and painting quality.

Lost on the Grand Banks is more dramatic than the others—two fisher-

men in a dory being driven by a gale over great white-capped waves, surrounded by thick fog, straining their eyes for a sight of their lost schooner. The motion of waves and boat driven by the wind fills the picture with a sense of the fury of the gale, while the leaden fog shutting in the world adds its note of dread. One of his broadest pieces of painting so far, it was not finished in any such detail as *The Fog Warning*. Its original tonality was warm and grayed. About 1900 he repainted the sea and sky in stronger, cooler color, with new tones of greens and blue-greens in the water. The contrast between the repainted picture and *The Fog Warning* shows how much he had learned in the interval about color and command of the brush. But even in its original form, judging by early reproductions, it was a finer work—more simplified and intense—proving that he was learning to eliminate details and to concentrate on the central motif. Among all his seapieces there is no more moving expression of nature's force and man's helplessness in face of it.

Arthur B. Homer owned an old sloop, the *Mattie*, at Prout's Neck. In the cabin were three wooden panels, two on the sides and one up forward. In 1884, probably after his trip to the fishing grounds, Winslow suggested painting something on these panels. Using his Gloucester watercolors of 1880 for material, he painted on one side the fishing fleet tacking into Gloucester harbor in late afternoon light, on the other two schooners against a sunset sky. For the forward panel he began a black-and-white study of a ship's officer taking a noon observation, Arthur acting as model. When it was nearly finished he suddenly stopped, said, "I am not going to do anything more on this panel. You can have it if you want it," gathered up his painting things and rushed into his studio. An idea had come to him, which subsequently took shape in *Eight Bells* (pl. 30).

This smallest and least ambitious of his deep sea epics was also in many ways the finest. It pictured no dramatic story but simply two bearded seamen in oilskins, one shooting the sun with a quadrant, seen against an expanse of tumbling waves and a windy, cloud-filled sky with the sun breaking through. The invigorating feel of the end of a gale was vividly conveyed. The color, though low-toned, was deep and full-bodied; the handling beautifully crisp and economical. Everything was seen largely and simply,

and the two figures were impressively monumental. That bigness of style that had been instinctive with him from the first but that he had seemed in danger of forgetting, had reappeared, but now more conscious; he had begun to simplify, to give just the essentials. The painting was free from certain faults of its predecessors—melodramatic themes, overambitious attempts to represent violent action. These two figures, going about their immemorial duties amid the waste of waters, were pictured with a large simplicity, a strength and repose, that give them an heroic, timeless quality. They seem symbols of man's courage and skill matched against nature. This sense of universality makes *Eight Bells* one of the enduring classics of the sea.

V

When painting *The Life Line* Homer had conceived a similar picture of rescue from the sea, *Undertow*—two half-conscious women bathers clinging to each other, being pulled out of the surf by lifeguards (pl. 29). Based on an incident he had witnessed at Atlantic City in 1883, it was begun on his return to New York but not finished until 1886. The preliminary work on it, as on *The Life Line*, was done on the roof of his New York studio. Two women models in bathing suits were locked in each other's arms and the artist threw water over them, to observe the effect of the sun on wet skin and clothing. The whole group of four figures engaged in their violent struggle is shown in full sunlight and glistening with wet that reflects the sun, sky and blue water, all seen against a blue-green wave about to break on them. In color it was one of his boldest works, a marked departure from the gray tonality of his recent oils, perhaps due to the eye-cleansing he had gotten in Nassau. The masterly drawing of the bodies, especially the women's, which have a large nobility like that of Greek sculpture, the grasp of action, and the full modelling of the forms relieved against the dark concave of the breaking wave, make this one of the strongest figure pieces in modern art. Homer's nearest approach to the nude except in his Bahama watercolors, it revealed a power in depicting the human figure unsurpassed by any American of the time except Eakins, and which would have made him a master of the nude if he had attempted that genre. Like Eakins but

unlike most of their contemporaries, he was attracted by the energy of the human body rather than its sentimental appeal, and hence by the male as well as the female figure.

Shown at the National Academy in the spring of 1887, *Undertow* drew almost as much praise from the critics as had *The Life Line*. The *Tribune* said: "After Mr. Homer's intense epic one must wait a little or other paintings of the figure will seem tame. . . . The scene is 'dramatic,' the favorite word for Mr. Homer's work, and yet it will be noticed that the artist has expressed himself with much reserve. . . . The superb figures are like sculpture in their modelling, and they have one of the prime qualities of sculpture in their physical grandeur and comparative repose. In his Bermuda sketches the artist suggested such figure work, but he has hardly equalled in his serious pictures these bronze heroes of the sea." Even the somewhat supercilious critic of the *Nation* admitted: "In this picture there is a breath of great art. . . . Were Mr. Homer a younger man and thoroughly trained in his art, . . . a wonderful future might be predicted for him. As it stands, . . . faulty as his work is in some respects, we cannot but accord to Mr. Homer a very high homage. His 'Undertow,' by its virility, its truth, its sincerity of intention, outranks every picture in the Academy exhibition."

Mrs. Van Rensselaer wrote two years later: "As regards color there were some who called this picture too bold and vivid, too crude and hard. But the timidity of their eyes was more in fault, I think, than the painter's vigor. Poor house-bound folk that we are, we have never really learned to see. . . . Thus we called unnatural many of those effects which were revealed to us, a few years ago, by the French Impressionists. . . . If we ever really see wet flesh under strong summer light with the reflections of blue-green water upon it, we shall surely note colors as bright and hard as Homer painted."

Here Homer has undertaken the most ambitious of all subjects—large-scale figures in full action. He has not tried to veil the scene or make it distant, but has presented this violent physical struggle close up and in full sunlight, and with the utmost clarity. Inevitably the picture challenges comparison with the masters of figure painting. Homer had many of the qualities that go to make up a strong formal artist. He had strength of draftsmanship, grasp of movement, a habit of seeing things largely and simply. But he did

not have that rare gift that the greatest plastic artists have possessed—a passion for form, like the much commoner feeling for color, by which the forms of nature are translated into the forms of art, into harmonies like those of color but far more profound and moving. His figures lacked this inner life of great art form; they remained vigorous representations of nature. Individual parts were superbly modelled—a face, a figure, an object; but this quality did not extend beyond the part, which remained unrelated plastically to the rest of the picture. The energetic movement displayed in single figures did not link up with any ordered movement throughout the whole design.

In these oils of the middle 1880's the decorative values that had been present in his early pictures, had all but disappeared. These had been instinctive and had showed in his work from the first, but he himself does not seem to have been fully aware of them, and for years had been striving for a naturalistic competence that took small account of them. This new-gained competence he was now exploiting, but he had lost many of the unconscious artistic virtues that had made his earlier work attractive. It was a phase of honest, vigorous naturalism, relatively innocent of purely artistic quality—as much a symptom of naïveté as his earlier crudities. This, however, was a temporary phase. By the 1890's he was to come to a clearer realization of his gifts and limitations, and his work was to regain its earlier artistic values, now more conscious. It is noticeable that never again did he attack a figure subject as ambitious as *Undertow*—one in which the action was as violent or prominent.

The seven oils painted between 1883 and 1886, from *The Coming Away of the Gale* to *Eight Bells* and *Undertow*, formed a definite storytelling, heroic phase of Homer's evolution. They were the most dramatic pictures he had painted and those in which the story was most important. But they were not literary; they did not depend upon literary or historical references, but expressed themselves in purely pictorial terms. There was little of the sentimentality and triviality that marked most storytelling art of the time. The themes, though scarcely sophisticated, were of elemental human significance. Their tone was simple, earnest, almost Biblical. They remind one of the old hymns about the sea—"Oh hear us when we cry to Thee, for

those in peril on the sea"—and in looking at them we seem to hear the echoes of those hymns sung in country churches or at evening "worship" in farm parlors. They are as characteristic a product of the life and mind of old New England as clipper ships and colonial portraits. Today they seem more dated than either his naïve early work or his more sophisticated later work; but they have a force and a genuineness that one suspects will outlast our present aversion to storytelling art.

Almost every one of these oils was exhibited at the National Academy within a year or two after being finished, and he had a painting a year in the Academy from 1883 to 1888. In the latter year he also showed for the first time at the Pennsylvania Academy. All the oils were well received by the critics. There was still some adverse criticism, chiefly because of his so-called harshness of color and hardness of handling; but in general his pictures were now ranked among the *clous* of the shows, and each successive work added to his reputation as one of the foremost American artists.

VI

Probably spurred on by the popularity of his sea paintings and by a desire to reach a wider audience, Homer took up still another medium, doing a series of eight large etchings of which all but one were based on these oils or on his English watercolors. His first plate, *Saved*, a reproduction of *The Life Line*, was started in 1884 just after the exhibition and sale of the painting. Most of the others were dated 1887 to 1889.

He later told John W. Beatty that he never had lessons in etching, but read books and inquired of friends who practised it, and worked things out for himself. The man who taught him most was his printer, George W. H. Ritchie, himself an etcher, who had a shop on West Fourteenth Street, New York, which Homer frequented when he was in town. Here he saw other etchers, including Alden Weir and Carleton Wiggins, who gave him advice. When he was in Maine, Ritchie would put the ground on his plates and send them to him. Homer bit them himself, but having no press he sent them to Ritchie for proving, and when finished for lettering and printing. Writing Ritchie from Prout's Neck in October 1888 about a plate he was working

on, he said: "It promises to be worthy of your pupil, which is more than I can say of some of my recent work. There has been altogether too much bragging for the small amount of creditable work." A few days later he reported: "I have bitten my plate to-day. It took me six hours with 20 minutes for the first line to go by. I think it is very fine. . . . If this turns out as good as I think, it is a mere echo of what I have seen you do, and I wish to assure you that I am most grateful to you."

His first plate was relatively amateurish; comparison of the first proof and the final state shows that he worked hard over it, and the result was labored and muddy. But his skill developed remarkably. By the time he did his next dated plate, *Eight Bells*, in 1887, he was handling the complications of biting and stopping out as if he had been doing them all his life. All his characteristic strength of draftsmanship was present, as well as a surprising ability to model in line—something he had not done, except in drawings, since his wood-engravings fifteen years earlier. It is true that he never exploited the nuances of the medium as Whistler did. Refinements of the line itself meant less to him than its function in building form. The tricks of the craft that the new school was beginning to exploit—manual cleverness, self-conscious economy of means, decorative clichés—found no place in his work, which belonged in an older, sounder tradition. Compared to the minor graces of these men, his style seemed hard and severe. But no American etcher of the time approached him in constructive strength, mastery of the human figure, and ability to use it in creating compositions.

Saved had been an almost exact reproduction of *The Life Line*, but as he went on he took more liberties with his originals. In *Eight Bells* he made the figures larger in relation to the whole space and placed them more effectively. In *Perils of the Sea* (pl. 25) he eliminated obtrusive details, giving more value to the two chief personages and more drama to the whole conception. In *Mending the Tears* he corrected the watercolor's chief faults—the blank background, the awkward wall, the empty upper half—allowing the two monumental figures their due prominence. In *A Voice from the Cliffs*, based on the watercolor which in turn was based on an oil, he adopted the improvements already incorporated in the watercolor and carried them further, resulting in the best composed of the three versions. In a second and larger

plate of *Saved* (pl. 25), one of his last prints, he changed the painting completely, simplifying the figures, focussing interest on the woman, and substituting a simple background of rocks and angry water—altogether a more concentrated composition. As in his illustrations, in the process of translating pictures from one medium into another he had greatly improved them, so that these etchings were among the most fully realized of all his works. These changes showed him increasingly aware of the value of concentrating interest on the central motif, and they prophesied a more radical simplification in his painting style within a few years.

The sale of the prints, handled at first by Ritchie without much success, was taken over by C. Klackner of New York about 1887, and on August 1st, 1888, Homer signed an agreement with him by which Klackner was to have exclusive publishing rights to such plates as the artist wished to turn over to him, each party to pay half the cost of paper and printing, and Homer to get half the net receipts. The large plates were priced at $20, with prints on parchment at $30; the smaller ones at $15. A year or two later Klackner also published large photogravures of *A Voice from the Cliffs* and *The Signal of Distress*. It is amusing to note that Klackner's circular on "Original Etchings by Winslow Homer" made no distinction between the etchings and the photogravures. Indeed, nothing about Homer's etchings had any of the preciousness usually associated with the medium. Intended primarily as reproductions of popular pictures, they were aimed at the general public rather than the small circle of print collectors. Their natural outlet was the framed-picture trade, and doubtless most of them, in golden oak frames, found their way into seaside boardinghouses and doctors' offices and similar unaesthetic homes.

Homer evidently had high hopes of financial success from his prints. He wrote Eastman Chase in May 1888: "I have an idea for next winter, if what I am now engaged on is a success, and Mr. K. is agreeable. That is to exhibit an oil-painting in a robbery-box [Homer's name for a shadow-box] with an etching from it in the end of your gallery, with a pretty girl at the desk to sell." But his hopes were not realized. Although probably no more than a hundred each were printed of most of the plates, the editions were not all sold out even by the end of his life, and today Ritchie's successor,

Charles S. White, still has a few prints signed by the artist. Of the largest and one of the finest, *A Voice from the Cliffs,* only six prints were made, and two years later it was replaced by a photogravure of the watercolor. Indeed, the photogravures sold rather better than the etchings. As late as the 1900's we find Homer writing Knoedler's: "Mr. C. Klackner has for sale *four etchings* etched by myself, at the expense of *two years time & hard work*—'The Life Line,' 'Peril on the Sea,' 'Eight Bells,' 'Mending Tears'—*all of which are very good,* and should have been put forward long ago, but C. Klackner is waiting for me to die, is my idea of the matter."

This lack of success is puzzling. It is easy to see why Homer's etchings did not appeal to print collectors, who were buying Whistler and the French etchers and would think his style deplorably unaesthetic. But why the general public for whom they were intended did not buy them, is harder to understand. They may have seemed somewhat grim to a generation partial to more sentimental art. Probably because of this lack of response he did no more etchings after 1889. This was a distinct loss to American printmaking. At the time he stopped he was improving steadily, using etching more and more as an original medium and not just a process of reproduction. Fine as his prints were, they were products of a stage when he had not attained his full growth; if the Homer of 1898 had made prints, they would have showed greater mastery. As it was, this small group can be numbered among his capital works in any medium. Homer himself thought so, for in a letter of 1902 he spoke of his recent watercolors as being "as good work, with the exception of one or two etchings, as I ever did."

VII

In spite of the popularity of his sea paintings, immediate financial returns were not encouraging. The spectacular sale of *The Life Line* was an exception. The other oils, though priced lower, were slower in finding purchasers. He put $2,000 on *The Herring Net* when it was first shown at the National Academy, but later reduced it to $1,200, which was also the price of *The Fog Warning. Lost on the Grand Banks* was reduced from $1,800 to $1,500. But there were no buyers. The only sale for some years was of *Eight Bells,*

bought by Thomas B. Clarke shortly after it was painted at a reported price of only $400.

About this time Gustav Reichard became his dealer in New York. Reichard used to tell how their connection started. They had had occasional dealings, but he was not Homer's agent, nor anyone else in New York. One day Homer walked into his store with a portfolio of about a dozen watercolors and said, "Here, Reichard, I want you to give me $300 for these." The dealer, feeling the inadequacy of the sum, answered that he would not care to do that; but seeing the disappointment on Homer's face, added, "But I'll tell you what I will do. I'll give you $300 and take the pictures and sell them for your account for the best prices I can get." This agreement suited Homer, and later Reichard had the satisfaction of sending him his share of the proceeds —considerably more than $300. Thereafter he was Homer's agent in New York as long as he remained in business.

However, the exhibitions of West Indian watercolors at Reichard's in December 1885 and at Doll & Richards in February 1886 resulted in only moderate sales—about a dozen or fifteen works, at prices around $75, netting the artist probably no more than a thousand dollars. The two exhibitions together were not as successful as any of Doll & Richards' three previous shows of his Gloucester and Tynemouth work. Hence his writing his sister-in-law from Boston in December 1886: "I hope to cut short my business here (this sounds extremely large when it means simply standing on one leg, one day & another leg some other day, & looking in vain for profits)."

This lack of financial success must have had something to do with the fact that he did not finish any more oils in 1887, 1888 and 1889. In September 1887 he wrote Charles: "I am very busy painting in water color which means something that I can sell for what people will give." But he added: "I have money in plenty." These watercolors were mostly of Prout's Neck fishermen and farmers, with a few of rocks and surf that anticipated his oils of a few years later. During these years he also resumed illustrating for a brief time. The *Century Magazine* was publishing a series of Civil War articles by veterans on both sides, later expanded into the four-volume *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*. Homer dug up his wartime sketches and did fifteen illustrations, altering the sketches freely but rather mislead-

ingly dating the new drawings in the '60's. Etching occupied part of his time in 1887 and 1888; in the latter year etchings and illustrations are the only works known. During these years he may have been working on the paintings which were to appear later. That he had ideas for other sea pictures is shown by several drawings, two dated 1886, one showing the deck of a wrecked ship, waves pouring over the side, a woman lashed to the mast. But neither this nor the other sketches were carried out, as far as we know, and not until 1890 did he finish any paintings. And after years of exhibiting regularly at the Academy and the Water Color Society, he stopped showing there, except occasionally, after the spring of 1888.

In spite of the failure to sell his oils, when it came to *Undertow* he stood firm on the price; he put $3,000 on it when it was first shown at Doll & Richards and later at the Academy, and in sending it to Reichard afterwards, he wrote, "My lowest price is $3,000." In January 1889 his brother's friend Edward D. Adams of New York expressed an interest in the painting and asked to borrow it to hang in his house, with a view to making an offer on it. Homer wrote him: "You have my permission to keep this picture on your wall as long as you find it agreeable within a years limit. In regard to your making me an offer on it, I can state to you now that my price is $3,000 less whatever commission I should have had to pay to any dealers had they sold it. Its first exhibition was in Boston and they would have charged 20%, that would make it net me $2,400, *and never will I take any less.* There is no hurry, look at this a month or two before you conclude, and remember that I much prefer that this should be in your house for the winter rather than in my studio." When he came back after four months' absence to Prout's Neck in July, he found Adams' check for $2,400 waiting for him—his first solid return for his work in five years.

VII

THE EIGHTEEN-NINETIES

When the Homers first settled in Prout's Neck they had been the only summer people. A few more families arrived in the 1880's, but it was not until the 1890's that the influx began, turning the place into a regular summer colony. Most of the Neck had been owned by a native family, the Libbys, descendants of the original settlers. They were land-poor, and Winslow's father, financed by Charles, bought their land piece by piece, until the Homers eventually owned three-fourths of the Neck. They set out to develop the place as a summer resort, laying out roads, building bath-houses and dividing the land into lots for sale. In all of this Winslow took an active part, acquiring some land himself.

After his mother's death his father spent summers in Maine and winters in Boston. "Old Father Homer," as everyone at Prout's called him, was what is known as a "character." All the Homers were property-conscious, but none as much as he. He was constantly getting into fights about land. Even after he sold it he thought he still owned it, and went around breaking down fences. Trespassing infuriated him. "He lived alone with his dog and colored man," wrote a friend, "and never allowed anyone to set foot on his place. He swore like a trooper and would shake his cane at any child picking flowers near his house. He was regarded by all children as an ogre." On the other hand, another friend remembers as a little girl being caught trespassing and offering the redoubtable old man "a large peppermint, which was solemnly accepted as a toll. For years we tried to have a peppermint to give him if we were so unfortunate as to be caught while we roamed—which seems to show a great vein of humor in that family."

Winslow shared some of this feeling about property, but his bark was worse than his bite. A gentleman who had bought land from the Homers was preparing to tear down a fence on his new place, when the artist appeared and said, "I think you'd better leave that fence just where it is." "Mr. Homer," the new owner replied, "if you'll come back tomorrow morning, you won't see a single stick of that fence." Homer said, "Mr.——, you and I are going to get on," and they did.

Old Mr. Homer had other peculiarities besides his obsession with land. He was a food faddist, he had queer notions about cold baths, and he let his hair grow long. All of this led to much good-natured kidding from his son, who delighted in making caricatures of him and sending them to Charles. "Father is having a good time by not agreeing to mind his own business & retire from active life," he reported; and again he described "Father hustling about trying to get in debt by fall."

The elder Homer was a teetotaler and did not approve of his son's enjoyment of drinking. Once Winslow tried to win him over. At eleven each morning for a week or more he would bring the old man a drink, and the following dialogue would ensue: "Now, father, don't you think you'd better take this? It will do you good." "Is there any alcoholic liquor in that, Winslow?" "Yes, father." "Then I won't touch it." "Father, if you don't take it, I'll drink it myself." "Well, Winslow, rather than have you destroy the tissues of your stomach by drinking this alcoholic beverage, I'll drink it." And he did.

Beneath this banter, sometimes hiding real exasperation, there was a deep affection between father and son, and as the old man passed his eightieth year and approached his ninetieth, Winslow watched over him constantly. During the winter he would run down to Boston every few weeks to see him, and almost always they spent Christmas together. In December 1895 he wrote Charles' wife: "Father & self have had a very pleasant Christmas. I shall go home to-morrow. I find that living with Father for three days, I grow to be so much like him that I am frightened. We get as much alike as two peas, in age & manners. He is very well, only he will starve himself. I shall go to Boston once in two weeks this next month to give him a dinner."

William J. Bixbee, the marine painter, who lived at old Mr. Homer's hotel, the Winthrop, about 1896 or 1897, told Downes: "He was a very agreeable old gentleman to talk with, and was fond of telling reminiscences of his long business life in Boston. His son Winslow used to come there to see his father every two or three weeks, and it was my privilege to become slightly acquainted with Winslow, who was not much inclined to 'talk shop.' But his father never tired of talking of his son, and his son's success. 'But,' he said, 'Winslow was a most unpractical business man.' And then he told

me of a picture that Winslow sent to his agents in New York, and told them to get fifteen hundred dollars for the picture. Some time afterward Winslow received a letter from the dealers telling him of some people who liked the picture very much, and had offered twelve hundred dollars for it. They (the dealers) wished to know if they should sell at that price. Winslow sat down and wrote a very short answer, saying, 'Make the price nineteen hundred dollars.' The old gentleman said that was the most unbusinesslike thing he had ever heard of, and said he was quite vexed about it, and he gave him quite a scolding. . . .

"In my slight acquaintance with Winslow Homer, I found him a rather pleasant man to talk with, but, as I said before, he avoided as much as possible talking about himself, or his work, or about pictures. He did not look professional. He dressed neatly, and had the appearance of a well-to-do business man. No affectation."

Between Winslow and his brother Charles there had always been a close bond, as in their boyhood, without the drifting apart that so often comes in adult life. The two were much alike—strong-minded, utterly honest, practical, drily humorous, unsentimental but tenacious in their family affections. Physically the resemblance was close, though Charles was handsomer and more heavily built, Winslow remaining slender all his life. Their tastes in most things were identical, and they never quarrelled. Both loved outdoor life, and regularly went on fishing and hunting trips together. They wrote each other constantly. Whenever a painting was finished and sent to New York, Winslow would notify Charles so that he could see it, and he gave him many watercolors. Charles was the more urbane and sociable. Having risen to be an officer in the Valentine Company, he was well-to-do, and the solid stand-by of the whole family.

Winslow's feeling for his elder brother comes out in a letter to Arthur in June 1891, after seeing Charles and his wife off to Europe: "I thought that you would all be glad to hear that Charlie & Mattie have had a fine day & the best steamer in the world to start them on their journey. Considering the old tubs that I have been over the ocean in, there is no doubt but they will have a fine voyage. I have never seen any one off before, that I cared anything about & I found it hard, & I was glad when the steamer was off

but N Y seems empty now to me. They had lots of friends to say good bye.

"I bet you everything will be just as it should be in the end since Charlie has to do with it."

Charles' wife, Martha French, thirteen years younger than himself, was included within this circle of brotherly affection. A woman of exceptional beauty and character, she had been very close to their mother; the family still owns many watercolors of flowers that the elder Mrs. Homer painted for the younger. Winslow's letters to Mattie are almost as numerous as those to Charlie, and reveal a warmth of feeling that he showed to no one else but his brother. The bond between the three was unusual and remained unbroken through the years. That Mattie had succeeded in establishing this relation with so thorny a character as her brother-in-law, is no small tribute to her.

Her family home was at West Townsend in northern Massachusetts, and here the Charles Homers spent the spring and fall, coming to Maine only for a short time in midsummer. Winslow often visited them at Townsend, especially at Thanksgiving. After one such stay he wrote this characteristic bread-and-butter letter: "Dear Mattie: It was a very pleasant visit to your house. I would not have anything different. There is one thing that I can tell you, knowing you better than some possible distinguished Englishman who may be put in that room to sleep. That is, if it happens to be a rainy night, the tin spout is within one foot of his head, and it's a 'ching-a-ching-link, ker, ching-a-ching-link,' all night. But with one finger in each ear he can sleep until he is smoked out in the morning by the kitchen fire. But I do not wish or deserve anything better."

With his younger brother Arthur his relations were less close; there was the five years difference in ages, and Arthur lived in Texas, coming to Maine only for summer vacations. He was the only one of the family who had children—two boys, Arthur and Charles, who were the subjects of two sarcastic drawings by their uncle—"Little Arthur in fear of harming a worm," dressed in a Little Lord Fauntleroy suit, delicately avoiding a worm; and "Little Charlie's innocent amusements," sitting on the cat and pulling the dog's tail, with a broken window in the background. The whole family was given to sharp but good-humored raillery of this kind, such as Arthur's nick-

name for *Undertow*—"the worms-for-bait picture." They loved playing unsubtle practical jokes on one another. It was not a family to encourage any genius complex in its members.

In the early years at Prout's Neck, when it was still a small community, Homer was fairly sociable, though far from hail-fellow-well-met. The few summer residents became good friends of his and his family's—his next-door neighbors the Burditts, and the Morgans, Gilberts, Hollands and Whittiers. It is true that he kept pretty much to himself, and it was generally understood that he was always working hard and not to be disturbed. To these neighbors who respected his privacy he was the soul of courtesy. Some of them remember that when they first arrived in the summer he would call on them, bringing a bouquet of flowers from his garden. Several tell of visiting him in his studio and being shown his paintings. Some Saturdays he would open the studio and invite the summer people to come and see his work. When he had finished a picture he would ask the Charles Homers and their guests over, or he would have a few neighbors in for tea.

"He was not always intolerant of visitors, as I know by experience," wrote a friend of Alice Homer, Arthur's wife. "Two occasions stand out in memory. One bright September afternoon when I was visiting Prout's a fog had come in suddenly and changed the plans of a friend with whom I was staying. 'It's not going to lift,' she said, 'but we will go over and see Winslow Homer,' and we did. She was, to be sure, a privileged friend, but nothing could have been more kindly and gracious than the welcome we had. I remember that Mr. Homer was in oilskins, and that he took his pipe from his mouth as he called genially to us to 'come up.' He had no pictures on exhibition, but he talked of his work. . . . On another occasion I went with Alice to the studio when there were visitors there. They admired and exclaimed over the canvases on view, but Alice whispered to me: 'We don't have to praise his pictures—Winslow doesn't like it. He will speak of them himself, if he wants to.' And he did, when the people had gone, very briefly, saying, 'This is one you will like, Alice; you like storms.' "

With a few male members of the summer colony he was on particularly good terms, and they called often for a drink and a talk. The Reverend Andrew J. Graham, pastor of St. James' Chapel at Prout's Neck, of which

old Mr. Homer was treasurer, wrote: "Winslow's closest intimates were his pipe and his brush. The latch-string to his door was not on the outside. Few people passed that portal. I suppose that it was owing to the cordial relations between his father and ourselves that we found entry easy of accomplishment. One day I went over to the studio, knowing he was there, and knocked vigorously on the door. No response. I knocked far from softly, and repeatedly. The door opened a couple of inches and one eye peeked out; then the door opened widely and in a few minutes we were sipping a very tasty beverage from tiny glasses."

It is notable that all these people felt they were being made exceptions of. Already he was acquiring the reputation of a hermit. And few were allowed in the studio while he was working. Among the rare exceptions were children. The Morgan boys remember seeing him often at work; when Hallowell Morgan, then about ten, would call, he would be given paper and pencil and would draw while Homer painted. Marie Seavey, the small daughter of a year-round neighbor, was a particular favorite of the artist, who used to take her out painting with him, a privilege no adults were allowed. She remembers that he worked fast and hard, putting things down and not laboring over them. Sometimes he would talk about other artists, usually to the effect that "they don't know how to paint."

Most of the year he spent at Prout's Neck, remaining usually well into December and often into January or February, and sometimes all winter. Every few weeks he would visit Boston to see his father, and in the early spring he would often spend some time in New York. And almost every year he got away for several weeks fishing—to Florida in the late winter or to the Adirondacks or Canada in the summer. But Prout's Neck was home to him, and he was never away for more than a few months.

The loneliness and rigor of the place in winter are hard to imagine. Laconic hints of what it was like appear in his letters: "These are tough days. Very cold; deep snow." "The wind has been blowing so hard that I could not think of writing." "Night before last it was 12 below zero here." "It has been too cold to go to Boston & leave my water & provisions, in fact it has been the very devil of weather." In reply to a telegram from Knoedler's: "I do not keep a horse & my nearest neighbor is half a mile away—I am

four miles from telegram & P. O. & under a snow bank most of the time, so I *cannot answer telegrams.*"

The studio was quite without luxuries. A plain frame building, unplastered, the interior sheathed in wood, it was heated only by a stove, and was always littered with paints, brushes, canvases, properties, and a large array of fishing and hunting paraphernalia, including a birchbark canoe he had brought back from Canada. He had a habit of using the walls as a notebook, and written all over them can still be seen addresses, memoranda, additions, subtractions. One cryptic note reads: "Oh what a friend chance can be—when it chooses." The comforts of his winter existence are revealed in a letter of December 5th, 1886, to his father: "I have just put coal on the fire, which accounts for this smut. I made a mistake in not getting a larger stove. It is very comfortable within ten feet of it. It heats the room within two feet of the floor, & water freezes anywhere within that space. I wear rubber boots & two pair of drawers. I know very well what a mistake I am making. I should 'simply irritate my skin & take a cold bath.' But water is scarce. I take a sponge & pick out certain portions of my body which I do at any time of tide, & always. I break four inches of ice to get my water. I thank the Lord for this opportunity for reflection, & I am grateful for the advantage I enjoy over Sir John Franklyn. P. S. Great storm last night. Cold as the d——."

He lived entirely alone, and no guests were invited to stay in his house. He did his own cooking, except something special such as a duck or a turkey, which his year-round neighbor Mrs. Seavey would take care of. But he lived well. Provisions were sent up regularly from the Boston markets, including the best of everything. He was a good cook and enjoyed his own food (though when deeply absorbed in work he often forgot to eat) and his letters are full of culinary matters, such as this to Charles one spring: "Things are looking very beautiful here today. I had my place covered with seaweed last winter & now it is raked off just before this rain it is as green as Central Park. I have raw Bermuda onions & *young* dandelions every day. . . . Do not waist so much on appearances you do not live well enough you do not eat enough or drink enough. I brought down Leg of Canada Mutton, two Spring Chickens, Bermuda onions, six bottles old rum, one Edam cheese,

six bottles of rare old vatted whiskey 'good as the Bank of England,' put up by S. S. P., Boston pilot bread. You see I can afford to live better than you can, as I cut off servants that mean all these good things—each extra *one* means about three legs of mutton, which you go without & eat corned beef & cabbage."

Back in Prout's Neck after a trip to Boston, he wrote his father: "When I got home about 1 o'clock I opened my fish & cooked two shad roes & cut up a cucumber in cold water—then, with a quart of South Side Scarboro cider, I knew that I was again in my own house." One fall he told a lady of the summer colony that he was going to make a large pudding and use it all winter. When she saw him next spring she asked how it had turned out and he replied: "The damned thing froze up in November and never thawed out until March."

He liked his liquor, though he never drank to excess. One of the many legends about him was that he retired to Prout's Neck to cure himself of drinking. Some of his closest artist friends of New York days have testified that there was absolutely no truth in this; he enjoyed drinking, but no more than any normal person.

A glimpse of his domestic life is given in a letter to Mattie thanking her for a Christmas present of wine: "I have proof that there is something fine in that wine, as I had taken a glass & was peeling vegetables for my dinner & thinking of the painting that I had just finished, & singing with a very loud voice, See! the Conquering Hero come, & I sung it,—Sound the *Parsnip,* Beat the Drum!"

The simplicity of his living arrangements suited him down to the ground. After spending the Christmas of 1893 with his father in Boston he wrote Charles: "Now that I am home and Father is very well I shall stay here where I can have a good bed & board & interesting work. When I am away from here I am obliged to sleep on the edge of the bed frame in order to get a nap as all the Hotel beds are too soft and stale."

A minor mania was to buy things in large quantities. When something in a store suited him he would buy up the whole stock. Socks, for example, he bought by the gross. When one of his brothers remonstrated with him, he retorted: "When will you learn that the time to buy a thing is when you find

what you want? If you go back the next year and try to get more, they will try to sell you something else."

He had inherited his mother's love of flowers, and there was always a garden beside the studio carefully tended and surrounded by a high board fence. His favorite way of paying his respects to anyone was with a bouquet, and when calling on a neighbor he always brought flowers. Once, wishing to pay special attention to someone who lived at a distance, he walked two miles carrying a nosegay and a glass of sherry. He grew his own vegetables, especially corn, for which he had a true New England passion. One year he tried raising tobacco and making his own cigars, even visiting a cigar factory in Portland and taking lessons from the workmen; but the cigars turned out badly and the experiment was not repeated.

There was much work to do on the land, building roads and walls, clearing brush, taking care of the houses, and in general acting as agent for his father and brothers in their absence. All this he enjoyed, judging from a letter to Charles in March 1896: "I am in receipt of your invitation to visit N. Y. It is too soon. I have things to do here that interest me more. I have just returned from burning brush over on the eastern Point. I will take N. Y. after I get through with this place, that will be about the time that Father arrives here." To Doll & Richards he once excused his slowness in answering a business letter by saying that he had been busy building a doghouse. To Louis Prang he wrote in October 1895: "You mention again my 'solitude.' Now you are quite mistaken. I am working with a gang of men on a road I am building—I shall blast tomorrow. In fact I have little time to attend to my painting." "I am getting in my ice," he wrote Charles in December 1890, "seven inches thick, & clear as glass. My pond is quite different from what you think. The water all comes in from the bottom & runs off at the top. Its a pretty sight to see it now," adding a sketch, and a postscript: "Thursday morning. The most beautiful day of the winter."

With all his love of the sea he never kept a boat at Prout's Neck. The anchorage was not well protected, and the care of a boat was probably too much; besides there was Arthur's sloop, the *Mattie*, and the fishermen's boats. His favorite sport at Prout's was fishing for tautog.

Often in the summer he would be up at half past four and out for a long

walk before anybody was about. Sometimes he could be seen watching the setting sun for a long time from the west beach. Walking constantly along the shore, he knew every rock and cliff and bush. This little peninsula with its picturesque and varied coastline, and the sea that almost surrounded it, seen in all weathers, lights and times of day, held inexhaustible beauties for him, giving him subjects for most of his later paintings.

One of his best friends at Prout's was Dr. James W. Holland of Philadelphia, whose portrait Thomas Eakins painted in *The Dean's Roll Call.* The doctor was a naturalist and shared with Homer an interest in the birds, animals and flowers of the neighborhood, and in local history. They walked together a great deal, and Dr. Holland kept a notebook on the flora and fauna and the early settlers of the Neck, to which the artist contributed bits of information. Sometimes Homer could be seen hacking away with his cane at the elderberry bushes, which he hated because they were soft and colorless; but he loved the tough hawthorn.

For years his constant companion was his fox terrier Sam. "After storms," wrote a friend who was a girl at the time, "we were sure of meeting the two walking along the paths and hunting the best surf, as we ourselves were doing, and Mr. Homer always stopped for us to speak to Sam. . . . The two always walked over to the post office at sunset for the mail, and it really was touching to see Mr. Homer walk so that Sam, growing more and more like a prize white pig and puffing so dreadfully, could keep up with him." In the winters Sam was put out to board with the Libbys, one of the girls receiving a twenty-dollar gold piece every spring for her care. Sam's death was such a grief to his master that he never got another dog, for fear of becoming attached to it.

When Charlie wrote in January 1897, suggesting that he ought to have a watchdog, he replied: "On *no* account send me a dog. The only companion I want is a Bobolink [sketch] & the next time I go to Boston I shall get one. My rooms are very sunny this time of year, the sun being low shines under my top piazza into my house & with my new stove makes this place perfect —all but the bobolink. As for robbers I have no fear of them, sleeping or waking. I am a dead shot & should shoot, without asking any questions, if anyone was in my house after 12 at night. I can do this, (living alone) with-

out any chance of a mistake—you could not do this without shooting Mrs. Wilson or Mr. Welch or your wife, who might be hunting for a quiet place to sleep in. I asked you a day or two ago if you were well—you did not reply to that—but this bulldog talk would suggest that you are all right." And a year later, evidently on the same subject: "My home here is *very pleasant, I do not wish a better place* & what I wrote in my last about a dog was only that I did not wish to be bothered in providing a boarding place for any more than *my birds* leaving *me free* to go, & come."

What with all his outdoor activities and doing his own cooking and housework, quite aside from painting, Homer could have had scant leisure. His library was small and he did little reading. "Early to bed and early to rise" governed his life. Still one wonders how he occupied himself on the long winter nights when there was no light to paint, when the snow was piled outside his door and the wind howled around his house and the surf thundered on the ice-covered rocks, with his nearest neighbor a half mile away. Only a mind of extraordinary strength and steadiness could have endured this solitude—not only endured it but thrived on it, like some hardy tree growing out of a rock. For Homer enjoyed this life, genuinely and thoroughly. Of this his letters leave no doubt; they contain not a word of complaint; on the contrary they are full of pleasure in his home, enjoyment of food and drink and housekeeping, delight in nature, even on the wintriest days, and complete satisfaction with his chosen way of life. The embittered misanthrope pictured by some writers is a figment of their own imaginations.

Writing in December 1893 to his old friend Louis Prang, the engraver, who had suggested visiting him, he said: "I deny that I am a recluse as is generally understood by that term. Neither am I an unsociable hog. I wrote you its true that it was not convenient to receive a visitor, that was to save you as well as myself. Since you must know it I have never yet had a bed in my house. I do my own work. No other man or woman within half a mile & four miles from railroad & P. O. This is the only life in which I am permitted to mind my own business. I suppose I am today the only man in New England who can do it. I am perfectly happy & contented. Happy New Year."

The day before his fifty-ninth birthday, in 1895, he wrote Charles: "I am very well with a birthday to-morrow. I suppose I may have 14 more

(that was Mother's age 73 years) and what is 14 years when you look back.

"The life that I have chosen gives me my full hours of enjoyment for the balance of my life. The Sun will not rise, or set, without my notice, and thanks.

"Only think of my absolute freedom. I have gained in, one item, *a years time* in the last 12 years, at one month a year (*Jury Duty*) for which I am willing to pay the community in work more agreeable to me, *and of more value to them.* Other things (notably, my being a spendthrift) are in favor of my home here."

II

In the late 1880's Homer began to spend several weeks each summer in the Adirondacks, no longer in Keene Valley but further south at Minerva, Essex County. This was a mountainous region of deep forests and many lakes, containing the headwaters of the Hudson River, here only a mountain stream. These trips were largely for fishing, and Charles often went with him, the two staying at the camp of the North Woods Club in Minerva, of which they were members. Of Winslow's talent as a fisherman his brother said, "He did not go in for expensive or elaborate tackle, but he usually caught the biggest fish." Some trips were devoted only to fishing, but more often art and sport were combined. A large group of watercolors was produced in the summer and early fall of 1889, and more almost every year through 1894.

The first season's works were mostly landscapes with figures subordinate, still somewhat tentative and gray. But beginning with the summer of 1891, when he was fifty-five, Homer struck his stride, and thereafter he never fell back. He had attained full mastery in watercolor; uncertainty or laboriousness were left behind. It was as if the first year's work had been tuning the instruments, and this was the performance. In these watercolors he was reaching the climax of his art, was bringing forth the ripe fruits of his years of study.

For subjects he had all the wild life of the forest. Fishermen in canoes on mountain lakes surrounded by evergreens whose dark colors were reflected in the still water, broken only by the boat's wake or the silver splash of a

fish. A deer drinking, straddling a log, its forelegs deep in the black water; or startled, raising its head to listen. A trapper stepping over a fallen tree, amid the solemn twilight and muted harmonies of the deep woods. Mountain streams flashing silver, amber and ultramarine. A woodsman on a mountaintop outlined against a cloud-filled sky; far below, a green valley holding the mirror of a lake; waves of hills receding to the steel-blue of distant ranges; in the gray light and clear air, everything sharp and cold but with a sombre northern beauty.

In most of these watercolors, and the best, the human figure played the leading role. But nature's part was more important than ever before. She was more than just a setting for human action; these woodsmen and mountaineers seemed part of her. The combination of man and nature was what interested Homer. He saw nature less like a poet than a woodsman, painting her objectively, expressing not poetic sentiments but physical sensations. By the vividness of his art he conveyed the direct sensation of the stillness of the deep forest, the black depths of the lake, the exhilaration of the mountaintop, the shy beauty of the deer, the virgin wildness of all this unspoiled world. His pictures seemed specimens of nature, as true a product of these solitudes as a fresh-caught trout, as tonic as the smell of evergreens or the icy shock of a mountain stream. Never had his art been closer to its primal source. Beside it other men's work seemed artificial.

A new sensitiveness to weather and nature's moods appeared. In *A Fisherman's Day* he has caught exactly the look of a still, overcast day on a lake, with glassy water, lowering clouds and the feel of it being about to rain. One can almost hear the mosquitoes, and if one is an angler he thinks, what perfect fishing weather! This was a subtlety of which he would have been incapable a few years earlier.

He was now painting purely by eye, as he had in his earliest years. But his eye was far more experienced than in his youth, and at the same time keener. It showed a fresher sensitivity, a greater awareness of the way that light transforms color and a new skill in representing light and shade and appearances. His vision was more photographic, partly because of the nature of his subjects—dark woods and water forming almost black backgrounds against which the figures are seen lit from above. Yet he never allowed light

to break up the forms and become the chief motif, as Sargent often did.

He was seeing more in terms of color than ever before. The grays of England had all but disappeared, and his color had gained enormously in freshness and strength. The gamut was wider, especially on the cool side—blues, blue-greens, blue-grays, purples. The general tonality was dark. Deep blue-green of pines, rust-color of autumn foliage, cold blue of distant mountains, gray and white of cloud-filled skies, all reflected in still water, in tones almost black but always liquid and transparent; by contrast, the bright red of a guide's shirt or the silver flash of a fish—these formed color harmonies full-bodied and resonant but with no hint of sweetness. In a few scenes in open sunlight he attained the greatest brilliancy he had in any medium. In *The Blue Boat* an old guide in a scarlet shirt sits in a bright blue canoe against a green shore and a blue and white sky, all in sunlight and all reflected in the water—a combination more daring than any previous. Just to show how he felt about it himself he wrote after his signature, "This will do the business."

A new breadth appeared. Details were suppressed, only the essentials given. The large massing of forms and colors in bold washes applied with a full brush, was something new in his work. The last trace of the colored drawing had vanished. He still made a summary pencil sketch to which the final forms adhered fairly closely; but he was now drawing freely with the brush, so that the whole process, from the first pencil indication to the last brushstroke, was a continuous one of drawing—a controlled improvisation, a bold, swift building of the picture. The handling was transparent throughout. When he wanted a white for the wake of a boat, a splash in the water, he scraped down to the bare paper. In pure skill these watercolors were equal to Sargent's, but with much greater solidity; they never fell into his vice of mere technical display. Homer was exploiting to the full the virtues of the medium—its swiftness, spontaneity, transparency. These watercolors were purer artistically than anything he had done in years. Here was no dull naturalism but the essentials of the scene or action grasped with brilliant mastery. Here, in these watercolors, was the essence of his genius.

As pictures they were more complete than any he had painted from nature. His large Tynemouth watercolors had been finished compositions, but done in the studio from sketches, whereas almost every Adirondack watercolor

gave evidence of having been done outdoors. Now he was painting watercolors direct from nature that were relatively complete pictorially yet retained all the spontaneity of outdoor work.

Their decorative quality was especially noticeable. More strongly than ever one feels color used for its purely sensuous values. His color schemes now appeared planned, achieving harmonies that remind one of Hokusai or Hiroshige. The decorative sense that had showed in his early work was reappearing, no longer naïve but with a new sophistication. He saw patterns in nature, and without departing from naturalism or becoming in any way stylized, he was re-creating these patterns with a realization of their abstract beauty.

Among the most curious of these works were several life-sized close-ups of trout leaping, their silver bellies and vermilion fins flashing against the dark water, butterflies and moths circling about. In one of the most original, *Mink Pond* (pl. 35), a brilliant little fish, a frog and other small creatures are seen among water lilies and pickerelweed, floating in still, crystal-clear water. In their interest in these minute beings, isolated from the larger world, and in their decorative beauty, these works remind one at once of La Farge's watercolors and of Oriental art.

Homer's Adirondack phase was a new departure in American watercolor painting. Up to this time most work in the medium had been in the old style of finished representation, even in the hands of progressive artists like Inness, Martin, La Farge and Eakins. Nothing like the freedom and brilliancy of these works had been seen before in this country.

In February 1890 Reichard exhibited thirty-two Adirondack watercolors, together with two earlier northern oils, *The Two Guides* and *Camp Fire.* By now the critics were getting used to Homer's watercolor manner, and they spoke with approval of "those bold effects of color, extreme breadth and facility of treatment and that science of abstraction on which this artist has based his powerful style," and cited his works as "admirable examples of painting the essentials and omitting the incidents." The *Sun* reported that they "excited an unusual share of popular attention. . . . Mr. Homer has met with a success which, if pecuniary outcome is any test, could hardly have been greater. The exhibition was a modest one, not very loudly heralded,

and it occurred while many others, including the water color show at the Academy, were open. Yet of the two oil paintings it included the more important was sold, and of the thirty-two water colors only a stray example or so still remains in the artist's possession. . . . It is needless to say at this late day that Mr. Homer is a master of water-color painting; but the simplicity and force of his brush were never better exhibited than here. . . . But it is a pity that he rates himself below his proper worth. Not only for his own sake, but for the sake of art and American artists in general, Mr. Homer ought to have asked more for these admirable water colors than $125 apiece." The *Art Amateur* confirmed the success of the show: "When the writer was last at the Reichard rooms, only three of Mr. Homer's water-colors remained of thirty odd; so it would seem that this admirable painter is actually becoming popular. His work used to be regarded as 'caviare to the general.' His prices are certainly extremely moderate and the purely American character of his subjects no doubt helped their sale."

This was the largest and most successful exhibition of his Adirondack watercolors. After that he raised his prices to around $200 to $300 and instead of holding big exhibitions, sent a few at a time to Reichard or Doll & Richards, who sold something under half of them. One of his greatest successes was a show of fourteen of his latest watercolors at Doll & Richards in December 1894. An enthusiastic review by Downes in the *Transcript* and the proximity of Christmas resulted in half of them being sold at prices around $200 for a gross total of $1,450. On the whole, he did better financially with his water-colors of the early 1890's than he had with the West Indian works of the 1880's. He was reaching a point where he could count on selling about half of those he painted, and at gradually increasing prices.

III

It was probably the success of his watercolor show at Reichard's in 1890 and the sale of *Undertow* that broke Homer's three-year abstention from completing any more oils. While not a single oil was dated from 1887 to 1889, no less than five were dated 1890, including some of his most important.

These new works showed a relaxation of the heroic spirit of the previous

decade. Instead of going far afield for subjects he took what was literally at his doorstep—sea and shore and summer-resort life. The storytelling vein gave way to a viewpoint at once more realistic and more poetic. And women reappeared in some pictures. The pleasantly lyrical *Cloud Shadows*, a girl talking to an old tar on a beach, shadows of clouds scudding across the dunes, was a throwback to his pre-Tynemouth subjects. *A Summer Night* (pl. 36) shows the porch of a house looking out on a moonlit sea, and two girls waltzing together, partly lit by lamplight from inside the house—a scene witnessed one night when some young people of the summer colony gathered on the rocks in front of his studio and two girls danced on the lawn. The magic of such a night is realized with a robust naturalism and a healthy delight in youth that has no hint of sentimentality. With all its poetry there is nothing vague about the picture. The composition gives evidence of careful planning. The porch's straight band forms a solid base for the whole design, echoed by the horizon line. The moonpath is in the direct center. These three fixed geometrical elements counterbalance the dancing figures, the surging waves, the play of moonlight on the water. The style is of the utmost simplicity. The color is limited to four main tones—slate-gray, gray-brown, warm tan and light blue—but so skillfully varied and balanced that they form one of his most effective color compositions. There is little attention to minor subtleties; an unemotional kind of painting, concerned only with the main planes and the general pattern, but attractive in its very severity. This taste and economy of means show that Homer had made a great advance in conscious artistry in the preceding few years. *A Summer Night* alone would be enough to disprove the notion that he was a simple naturalist merely copying what he saw and achieving aesthetic values by blind instinct.

Living now with the sea at his door, he embarked on a new kind of subject —pure seascape. Up to this time almost all of his paintings had been primarily figure pieces, and except in his watercolors nature had remained a setting for human action. From now on the positions were gradually reversed, humanity playing a lesser role and nature a larger one. His first seascape was *Sunlight on the Coast*, dated 1890. A big wave is gathering itself to break on rocks. Cold white sunlight is reflected on its crest and on the sea, but a gray fogbank is creeping in, obscuring sky and horizon and throwing the

sunlit green wave into dramatic relief—a peculiar weather effect accurately observed. The sense of the wave's power, its sheer mass in motion, and of the rocks' solid resistance, is forcefully conveyed. Technically this was one of his broadest works so far, the paint laid on with a full brush and in places with a palette knife. This first marine with its photographic vision and hard, startling color lacked the subtler qualities of his later seascapes, but it had an impact that was promising for the future.

Of this same year was his first winter subject in Maine, *Winter Coast.* A sombre day; high surf pounding snow-covered cliffs and throwing great columns of spray up against a leaden sky; a lone hunter with a wild goose slung over his shoulder, watching this display of elemental force. One seems to hear the roar of the breakers and the piping of the wind, and feel the ground tremble. In this battle between sea and land the dramatic sense shown in his sea stories reappeared in an artistically purer form. The furious movement of the waves and the rugged strength of the cliffs created a balance of opposing forces, resulting in one of his most satisfying designs. The quiet grays and whites of sky, snow and rocks, with the notes of green waves and rusty brown dead grass, make an austere harmony. The picture reminds one curiously of Courbet's snow scenes, in a style less romantic and richly sensual, more accurate and refined.

In December 1890 he wrote Charles: "I have got a fine picture called 'The Distress Signal' a scene in mid ocean. [Here he made a sketch.] I expect to do well." *The Signal of Distress,* as it is now called, was a return to his heroic phase of the 1880's (pl. 31). A ship's deck during a storm; a vessel in distress has been sighted and the sailors are swarming up the davits to launch a lifeboat in mountainous seas. The wild sweep of wind-torn waves, the actions and characters of the men, were pictured with sure naturalistic skill. The color, as in most of his oils of this time, was limited—stormy, melancholy grays of sea and sky, gray-browns of figures and deck, relieved by a few notes of yellow and red. But the dull murkiness of his English oils was gone; within a restricted range the color was clear and beautifully managed, an exquisite variety of grays making this one of his subtlest works. Between 1892 and 1896 he repainted it, as he did several oils of the 1880's and early 1890's. A comparison of the present picture with Klackner's large

photogravure of 1891 shows that the ship's rail and part of the rigging have been eliminated, the sea repainted and the wrecked vessel changed from a ship under full sail to a dismasted hulk—all steps towards suppressing details that distracted from the main action.

Altogether, these oils of 1890 marked a great advance. He had given up storytelling (except in *The Signal of Distress*) and was picturing subjects close to his own life. He was revealing a deeper feeling for nature, a subtler sense of mood, a new vein of natural poetry. And the gain in artistry was no less marked. He had become more conscious of the value of simplification and the necessity for planned pattern. His color was now the result of deliberate arrangement of color harmonies, and while still reserved was attaining a new clarity and strength. His technique was freer and broader. The three fallow years had brought a remarkable new growth.

The four chief paintings of this year were exhibited at Reichard's in February 1891. Homer had not shown any oils for three years, and they were enthusiastically received by the critics. The *Art Interchange* called them "the best work he has ever done." In the *Collector* Alfred Trumble wrote: "To say that Mr. Winslow Homer exhibits at Reichard & Company's galleries the four most complete and powerful pictures he has painted, is to do them but half justice. They are, in their way, the four most powerful pictures that any man of our generation and people has painted. Nothing of the artist's previous work touches them, and, what is better still, they are sufficient to indicate to anyone who has followed the career of this original and rarely gifted man, that he has worked the problem of his art to a solution from which he will not retrograde. . . . A great American artist, in the full greatness of an art as truly American as its creator; what words could mean more?" On the other hand, the *Art Amateur*, after praising *A Summer Night*, which it compared to "a chapter out of Tolstoi," added that it would be better if the dancing figures were omitted: "their commonplace forms and commonplace action seem to us in positive discord with the sublime quiet of the night."

Winter Coast and *Sunlight on the Coast* were immediately bought by John G. Johnson of Philadelphia. The other two found no purchasers at the time. Homer later told a friend that the Potter Palmers of Chicago

had visited him at Prout's Neck and asked him to paint a picture for them, so he sent them *A Summer Night*, but received a polite note that the picture was being returned with no reasons given. "That was the last I heard of them," said the artist. Sent to Doll & Richards next fall, priced at $2,000, it was enthusiastically praised by Downes in the *Transcript*, but again came back to him. He then lent it to the Cumberland Club in Portland, where it hung for years.

From the time he settled in Maine he painted fewer oils than in his youth. Some years he might finish only one, in others four or even six, but he averaged about two or three. By this time he had become much more self-critical than before; he had learned that it is better to paint one good picture than ten mediocre ones. He was no routine manufacturer; he was never interested in repeating what he had done once. Even his marines, the most similar of his works, were extremely varied; problems of weather, light, mood were different in each; they never became standardized products like those of later specialists in seascape. Every picture was turned over in his mind a long time before it was painted. Often he kept a motif in his head for years before carrying it out. And though he was a fast worker, spending a relatively short time actually painting a picture, his sessions of work were sometimes spread over months and even years. He had learned to concentrate his energy—to loaf and invite his soul, to wait for the right motif and mood, but to work intensely when he did work.

IV

His Adirondack trips resulted in two oils. From Minerva on October 15th, 1891, he wrote Charles, who had just returned from Europe: "I am working very hard & will without doubt finish the two oil paintings that I commenced Oct 2nd & great works they are. Your eye being fresh from European pictures, great care is required to make you proud of your brother. The original ideas of these paintings are in water-color & will not be put on the market, but will be presented to you with the one that I made expressly for you."

The first to be finished, *Huntsman and Dogs* (pl. 34), shows a husky young woodsman returning from the hunt with the skin and antlers of a

deer, his hounds circling around him barking. It is a dark autumn day and the brown grass and dying foliage, cold overcast sky, gray light and sharp air are full of a sense of coming winter. The realistic landscape, a bare mountainside with charred tree stumps, and the unidealized characterization of the boy's tough, sullen face make this a powerful piece of naturalism, an authentic image of primitive American life, while in its sober resonance of color and intensity of mood it is deeply poetic.

Exhibited at Reichard's in December 1891, the picture did not please the tender-minded critics of the day. The same Alfred Trumble who had admired *A Summer Night* expressed a kind of fascinated horror in this new work: "It is one of the least attractive pictures which the artist has painted —a bit of cold, uncompromising realism, which might have been created as an original for a Currier & Ives lithograph. Every tender quality of nature seems to be frozen out of it, as if it were painted on a bitter cold day, in crystallized metallic colors on a chilled steel panel. The type of the huntsman . . . is low and brutal in the extreme. He is just the sort of scoundrel, this fellow, who hounds deer to death up in the Adirondacks for the couple of dollars the hide and horns bring in, and leaves the carcass to feed the carrion birds. . . . Throughout, the picture—albeit well composed and firmly drawn,—is a cold, unsympathetic work, entirely unworthy of the artist." This, however, did not prevent its being purchased from the exhibition by Edward W. Hooper of Boston.

The second oil was *Hound and Hunter*, finished in 1892. The same tough young woodsman lies in the bottom of a boat grasping the antlers of a deer in the water and calling angrily to his hound who is swimming to join the fray. Again Homer's naturalism shows in this unheroic but veracious scene and in his exact characterization of the hunter. Bryson Burroughs, meeting him in the last year of his life, spoke enthusiastically of the painting. "The old gentleman was restive and broke in on my eulogy, 'I am glad you like that picture; it's a good picture. Did you notice the boy's hands—all sunburnt; the wrists somewhat sunburnt, but not as brown as the hands; and the bit of forearm where the sleeve is pulled back not sunburnt at all. That was hard to paint. I spent more than a week painting those hands.' "

As in his watercolors of similar subjects, the vision is close to the photo-

graphic. The wooded shore casts a twilight over the whole scene, broken only by bright reflections in the water. The main forms—the man and boat—are so close in value to the background that although solidly enough painted they are not modelled plastically by the light, while the chief contrast in values is reserved for something that has no real form, the reflections.

It is interesting to compare these oils with the watercolors on which they were based. Besides the obvious advantage of scale and power of medium, the oils were much more thoughtfully composed, their elements better fitted to the picture space. In comparison the watercolors seem incomplete in composition. On the other hand, the oils have lost certain qualities of the watercolors. The freshness of a direct vision has evaporated. The swift skill that is one of the watercolors' charms has become mere competence when translated into oil. Transparency has changed to the limited opaque technique that he practised in oil, so that brilliancy of color has given way to sombreness. The color is more planned but less living. In essential painting quality the watercolors are purer. Translating them into oil has produced pictures more powerful and complete but in some ways less alive. Homer had not yet learned to retain in oil the virtues of watercolor. Indeed he was never to succeed completely in this; but in later years he was to come steadily closer to it.

To Thomas B. Clarke he wrote in late October 1892: "I cannot say now what my plans are for the winter, but I think I shall show in Boston my only new oil color with ten or so watercolors (all Adirondacks). . . . I have painted very few things this summer, for the reason that good things are scarce and I cannot put out anything in my opinion bad. . . . I think I owe it to you to give you more particulars about this oil picture. I have had it on hand over two seasons, and now it promises to be very fine. It is a figure piece pure and simple, and a figure piece well carried out is not a common affair. It is called 'Hound and Hunter.' [A sketch here.] A man, deer, and dog on the water. My plan is to copyright it, have Harper publish it in the 'Weekly' to make it known, have Klackner publish it as a print, and then exhibit it for sale, first in Boston (at $2,000), with my watercolors." This ambitious scheme was not carried out, and the picture remained unsold for ten years.

V

To 1891 belong two Prout's Neck paintings alike in subject but otherwise totally different. *Watching the Breakers* shows the end of a storm, when summer visitors venture out to see the surf. Here they are, two young ladies in long-skirted dresses, standing on the rocks watching the combers boiling in. The clouds are breaking and weak sunlight falls on the scene. Dashing waves, curling spray, rolling clouds, blowing dresses fill the picture with spirited, almost rococo movement. Not as deeply felt as other works of the time, its pleasant, relaxed spirit harks back to pre-Maine days, reminding one of his Houghton Farm phase. Today it seems quaintly old-fashioned, though as a document of summer-resort life in the 1890's it has its charm.

Opposite in mood was *The West Wind* (pl. 37), originally called *March Wind*. A dark day, with an offshore gale flattening the dead grass, twisting the junipers and buffeting the figure of a woman who stands watching the surf piling in, its spray blown backwards. The scene is full of the strong wind and the opposing motion of wind-blown waves charging the shore. It is nature in one of her most melancholy moods, with a feeling of the death of the year but also of the keen invigorating life of the gale. The color is almost monochromatic—dun-colored shore, the sky a cooler, more violet hue of the same tone, only the livid green breakers furnishing any strong contrast; but subtle variations throughout save it from monotony. Evidently painted fast, the picture is seen as a whole, at one look, but it is too full of life to be empty. The utmost economy of means governs it; the artist knew what to put down, what to leave out, when to stop. In its taste, close values and delicate grays, it was more consciously aesthetic than any picture he had painted—remarkably akin to Whistler but with an energy that he conspicuously lacked.

This was pure expression of a mood of nature—as pure as an Inness, but fundamentally different. To Inness the purpose of painting was "to awaken an emotion." Deeply religious, he saw nature with a strong element of Wordsworthian moralism: "Rivers, streams, the rippling brook, the hillside, the sky, clouds—all things that we see—will convey the sentiment of the highest art if we are in the love of God and the desire of truth." One

cannot imagine Homer saying this. His purpose was more objective. He was not trying to express directly his own emotions about nature but to create a living image of her. His interest was less in the sentiment of nature than in the play of natural forces—the power of the sea, the strength of rocks, the impulse of wind, the movement of clouds, changing weather, light and atmosphere. His picturing of these elements always had an overtone of mood, but it was not aimed at exclusively, as with more subjective artists. There was less overt emotion than physical sensation in his attitude towards nature. What he lacked in tenderness and contemplativeness was compensated by vitality. His art captured some of nature's own energy and eternal freshness, so that nature herself seems to speak through it. It attained a genuine poetry, harsh and invigorating, free from the sentimentality of most American landscape painting of the time. Nature's softer moods attracted him less than her desolate or dangerous aspects. Inness' love of pastoral landscape found no counterpart in Homer's mature work, concerned with the sea and wilderness, the kind of nature least touched by civilization. There was a strong dramatic element in all his landscapes—the struggle between sea and shore, between wind and wave. Always he remained essentially a storyteller, the story now being in terms of impersonal forces rather than in human terms.

A friend of the Homers, Mrs. Landreth O. King, wrote: "It was a very familiar sight to see Winslow out on the rocks painting, and particularly after a big storm. I remember one day in the early fall of 1891 when a strong wind was blowing, seeing him painting as I stood and watched the magnificent surf. Later, Mrs. Arthur Homer invited me to go to the studio (by special permission of Mr. Homer, who never allowed anyone inside the doors), saying she had a surprise for me. Mr. Homer received me most graciously and the 'surprise' was indeed a big one for I recognized at once that the figure standing on the cliff in the well-known coat and tam-o'-shanter was myself!"

Shown at Reichard's in February 1892, *The West Wind* and *Watching the Breakers* were well received by the critics. The former was bought from the exhibition by Thomas B. Clarke, and the latter two months later by George I. Seney (at the Seney sale two years later it was to fetch $640).

In the space of a little over a year (from January 1891 to April 1892), Reichard had sold *Winter Coast, Sunlight on the Coast, Huntsman and Dogs, The West Wind* and *Watching the Breakers*—all but three of his new oils. Well might Homer write Mattie in April 1892: "You will be glad to know that I also have had great luck this past year and as Father tells me, I am rich."

VI

From the late 1880's on he exhibited his work seldom in the large New York shows. After the spring of 1888 he was absent from the Academy and the Water Color Society until 1906 at the former and 1905 at the latter (except for one year). This could not have been from being rejected, for he was still a member of both institutions and hence not subject to the jury. "I have been kept from the Academy exhibitions," he wrote Alden Weir in 1898, "by the fear of the corridor and the impropriety of my trying to make terms as to placing my work." Having an enterprising New York dealer now, he preferred to show his work there. So except at Reichard's or in occasional loan exhibitions, the New York public had few chances during the 1890's to see the work of one who was now ranked high among American artists.

His two dealers, Reichard in New York and Doll & Richards in Boston, exhibited his new oils and watercolors every year or so. Both of them did well by him, disposing of a fair proportion of his works. In his native city in the 1890's he attained a popularity such as Boston reserves for only a few favorites. Bostonians have always been great collectors of watercolors, for some occult reason, perhaps connected with thrift; and in buying his watercolors they also showed that other characteristic Boston trait, discrimination. From every exhibition at Doll & Richards a good part of the watercolors were sold, and the best. On the other hand, only four of his mature oils found their way into Boston collections during his lifetime. His chief patron in the city was Edward W. Hooper, treasurer of Harvard College and a trustee of the Museum, who beginning as early as 1880 bought over twenty watercolors and drawings, and the oil, *Huntsman and Dogs*. Among other owners were many who made social and intellectual Boston what it

was—Thomas G. Appleton, Martin Brimmer, Thomas Wigglesworth, Dr. Henry C. Angell, Dr. William Sturgis Bigelow, Henry Adams, Brooks Adams, John T. Morse, Jr., Mrs. Samuel D. Warren, Mrs. Sarah Wyman Whitman. And since Bostonians have a way of keeping what they like, many of his finest watercolors can still be found in the old houses on Beacon Hill.

Among New Yorkers who bought his pictures were George I. Seney, William T. Evans, and later George A. Hearn, each of whom owned several of his pictures, and some such as Evans had friendly personal relations with him. At the Water Color Society in 1891 he showed his large English watercolor, *Mending Nets,* which he considered one of his best and therefore priced at what he thought a prohibitive figure, $800. Coming home after the opening he said, "Charlie, what do you think, some damn fool has gone and bought that picture." The "damn fool" turned out to be Charles W. Gould of New York, who later purchased *The Herring Net* and twenty watercolors, now in the Art Institute of Chicago.

It was about 1890 that Thomas Benedict Clarke, the greatest collector of American art of the time, became interested in his work. Clarke was an unusual collector. In a day when rich Americans were vying with each other for the latest Salon prize-winners, he concentrated on the work of native artists, chiefly living men. Knowing most of them well, he purchased directly from them, and could say that he had seen nearly all his pictures being painted. He bought young and unknown men, and always he bought what he liked. His purchases were enormous, eventually numbering almost four hundred. His taste was of his day and he made his mistakes by the score, as anyone must who deals with living art. A penchant for the storytelling picture resulted in his owning twelve Louis Moellers and seven Abbeys but only one small Eakins. Sticking to home talent, he had nothing by Whistler, Sargent, Duveneck or Cassatt. But along with mediocrities he acquired much that still seems good—seven Homer Martins, seven Wyants, five Blakelocks, two Ryders, two Fullers. His great admiration was Inness, and since if he liked a man's work he never cared how much of it he already had, ultimately he owned no less than thirty-nine Innesses.

Clarke did more than buy American art himself; he got his wealthy friends to buy it. As William A. Coffin said: "He used to write me pleasant

notes, in his firm straightforward handwriting, saying: 'Mr. So-and-so is in town. Have you anything fresh and good?' As a consequence, he brought to my door at various times men whom he had personally interested in American art, and they bought pictures." In the course of this missionary work he had to stand much ridicule from friends who were paying fancy prices for Gérômes, Cabanels, Ricos and Makarts, and thought that buying American art was a sheer waste of money. An inveterate clubman, he was a member of the Century, Union League, Manhattan, Lambs, New York Athletic and many others. In this golden age of New York club life these institutions did far more for art than today. As chairman of their art committees year after year Clarke arranged scores of exhibitions, constantly lending his own pictures. He was not above renting the Fifth Avenue Art Galleries at one time and running what he called "Art House," where he held exhibitions and sold pictures "to call attention to the merits of the productions of native painters." With him the line between patron and dealer was never sharply drawn, and he sold and traded his pictures and acted as agent for artists; and he was to make big profits in his auction in 1899. But in the meantime he had done more for living American art than any other individual of his time.

Although he had started collecting in 1872, by 1879 when he already owned 110 works including nine Innesses, he had only one small Homer, *The Happy Family*. But in the late 1880's, as Homer's style matured, Clarke became interested in him. Within a few years Homer shared with Inness the chief place in his admiration, and Clarke had become Homer's greatest patron. "I wish that he could have known how I loved his oils and watercolors," he wrote Downes after the artist's death. The first important Homer he acquired was *Eight Bells*, purchased in 1886 or 1887. Then he began to buy the artist's earlier oils and watercolors. By the fall of 1891, when his collection was exhibited at the Pennsylvania Academy, he owned six oils, including *The Two Guides* and *Camp Fire*, and at least six watercolors. In 1892 he purchased no less than four oils: two early negro subjects, *The Carnival* and *A Visit from the Old Mistress*, paying Homer $1,000 for the two; and two of the latest works, *The West Wind* and *Coast in Winter*. The following year he bought the repainted Tynemouth oil, *The Gale*, from

Reichard for $750. Over the years he bought at least sixteen watercolors.

Clarke was a shrewd bargainer and judging from known prices he certainly did not overpay Homer. But no doubt the artist felt that low prices were made up for by the volume of purchases; indeed the two probably had some understanding to that effect. And unquestionably Clarke did an enormous amount for Homer. By singling him out for extensive buying, along with Inness, he built up his reputation. He lent his pictures to scores of exhibitions, with all the prestige given by a famous collection. Whenever he arranged exhibitions in his clubs he included Homer—the chief way the artist's work was seen in New York in the 1890's, except at Reichard's. And he induced his friends to buy. Next to Charles Homer, Clarke was the strongest outside influence on the artist's career.

In early 1892 Clarke wrote Homer that he was planning to devote one room in his house to his works and call it the Homer gallery, and told how John Singer Sargent had come to see the collection, and particularly the Homers. The artist replied: "I never for a moment have forgotten you in connection with what success I have had in art. I am under the greatest obligations to you, and will never lose an opportunity of showing it. I shall always value any suggestion that you may make. . . . Now that you have space in 'your Homer Gallery' I can from time to time as you fancy any work let you have it. I will be glad to have it with you in place of returning it to my studio. The pictures that Reichard now has if they are not sold by May 1st you are welcome to as a loan, if you will store them in your Gallery for two years (more or less)."

In February 1895, when Reichard gave up his Fifth Avenue gallery, Clarke suggested that he act as Homer's agent in New York. The artist answered: "I must thank you for your continued interest in my work, and for your suggestion which I consider a great comp^t^. I can see that it would be greatly to my advantage to ask you to take charge of all my work now that Mr. Reichard has given up his gallery on Fifth Ave. But two years ago and without any reason beyond my being grateful to them for their success in selling my work, (they sold the most of it to you & your friends) and my appreciation *of them all* as gentlemen, I wrote to them that *'I appointed them my New York agents,—for life.'* Since that has been

said, it must stand. Mr. Reichard has already written me that he is not to give up the picture business."

At the World's Fair in Chicago in 1893 Homer was represented by no less than fifteen paintings—more than any other American artist except Inness and Frank Fowler—including some of his best oils to date. Seven of them were lent by Clarke. He received a medal and a diploma for the group as a whole—his first known award. The honor was nothing special, for fifty-six other American painters received the same, and ten per cent of the nine thousand pictures in the Art Palace were given awards. He visited the Fair and painted a small monochrome oil of Macmonnies' fountain in the Court of Honor, seen at night under electric light, a gondola crossing the basin with two women passengers. "That painting in black and white," he wrote Reichard December 11th, "I will sell for cost—that is my expenses to Chicago $280, *net to me.* Sell it before Christmas, or *I give it away.*" No purchaser appearing, he gave it to Charles for Christmas.

VII

Homer's winters in Maine produced a series of paintings that were among his most original works. They had begun in 1890 with *Winter Coast.* The year 1892 brought forth *Coast in Winter* (pl. 38), similar in subject but more ambitious. A huge wave, its crest blowing back like a horse's mane, is hurling itself on ice-covered cliffs. The shore is muffled in snow save for bare patches of dead grass. No human figures appear, and this battle between the elements takes place under a gray sky in an Arctic void. The composition was one of the most complex he had attempted. Former seascapes had taken small sections of the shore, but here the viewpoint was wide, the compositional elements many. The snow-covered foreground forms a base for the whole, while charging wave and resisting cliffs produce a play of opposing forces. The long undulating lines of the foreground, echoed by cliffs and wave, form a linear pattern of much originality and beauty. The design, it is true, has weak points. The two main lines parallel each other too closely for strength, achieving rhythmic grace but not the dramatic contrasts of his simpler motifs. The color scheme is deliberately planned, in whites, grays

and hues of grayed green and lavender—a pallid harmony of Whistlerian refinement. In its curious contradictions the picture was one more example of the conflict in his art between the eye and conscious design, but this time more successfully resolved. It attempted more in composition than previous works and came nearer achieving it.

What was foreshadowed in *Coast in Winter* was realized completely next year in *The Fox Hunt* (pl. 39), his largest and one of his greatest paintings. In the hard Maine winters when the ground had long been covered with snow, a flock of starved crows would sometimes attack a fox. Here we see the animal plowing through deep snow with a menacing cloud of birds hovering over him. Distant surf beats on snow-covered rocks, and a cold sun breaks through a leaden sky to reflect in a leaden sea. There is no trace of man or his works; this primitive struggle in the solitude of the north is an image of Arctic desolation.

Here his preoccupation with decorative qualities is more apparent than in any previous work. The fox's red-brown body against the snow, the crows' black plumage against the gray sky, the distant bushes echoing the animal's color, the long subtle undulations of the snow and its delicate variations in color and tone, the fine tracery of bare plants against it—all form a carefully pondered pattern. The passage in the left distance—snow and gray rocks, pale green surf, leaden sea and sky broken dramatically by cold white sunlight—is especially striking. The refinement of execution is unusual. The contrast of the fox's furriness with the smooth snow, the crows' intricate plumage with the plain sky, reveals a feeling for textures that he did not often show. But with all its subtlety, how largely conceived! It has the bigness and simplicity that mark all his mature work. Some of Whistler's sense of pattern is united to a greater structural strength. Once more we feel that affinity to Oriental art that had appeared in his earliest work. But the decorative gift that had been instinctive in his youth was now far more conscious. The two main strands of his artistic nature—naturalism and decoration—had finally joined to produce a work which if not attaining the deepest kind of three-dimensional design, was a superb piece of selective naturalism.

In painting it he used the skin of a fox shot by one of his neighbors, spreading it over a barrel in the snow. Having trouble with the crows, he

asked the Scarboro station agent to look at the painting and tell him what was the matter with them, and took his advice to study the birds as they flocked around the station. Years later, when the picture was hanging in the Pennsylvania Academy, an Adirondack guide who was being taken through the collection, with a perfunctory "That's purty" here and "That's *real* purty" there, spied *The Fox Hunt* and burst out, "By——, I've *seen* things like that!"

In March 1893 he wrote Reichard: "The 'Fox Hunt' is finished & I will send it early in the week. . . . The 'Fox Hunt' I shall not give a price on, until it has been seen, & I should like your advice about it. It is quite an unusual and *very beautiful picture.* [Here he made a sketch of a bald-headed gentleman hiding a lamp under a large basket, captioned "W. H. 'hiding his light under a bushel.' "] Price should be no object to any-one wishing it. When I see the price that portraits bring—from $3,000 to $6,000—and consider the difference in the skill required in arranging & painting a scene in out of door light I do not see why I should not get a good price for this." But Reichard found no purchaser for it in New York, and in June Homer sent it to Doll & Richards, priced at $2,500. Downes praised it highly in the *Transcript*, but again there were no buyers.

This may explain the mood of a letter in October 1893 to the Chicago dealers, O'Brien & Son: "I am in receipt of your letter of October the 8th inviting me to have an exhibition at your Galleries. In reply I would say that I am extremely obliged to you for your offer, and if I have anything in the picture line again I will remember you. At present and for some time past I see no reason why I should paint any pictures. P. S. I will paint for money at any time. Any subject, any size." In considering this remarkable communication we should take into account that he had not sold a recent painting in a year (the nine-year-old *Fog Warning* being the only one disposed of in that time, as far as we know) and that still unsold, besides *The Fox Hunt*, were several works—*Lost on the Grand Banks, The Herring Net, A Summer Night, The Signal of Distress* and *Hound and Hunter.* This was not the first time that in a temporary fit of discouragement he had solemnly announced that he was giving up painting; nor was it to be the last. These statements need not be taken too seriously. Two months later

he was writing Charles: "It has been too cold to go to Boston & leave my water & provisions, in fact it has been the very devil of weather, but I have been most comfortable & happy in having painted a picture 'Below Zero' *which is fine.*"

To continue the history of *The Fox Hunt*, it was shown in the next annual exhibition of the Pennsylvania Academy, which bought it in April 1894—his first important purchase by a public institution. Probably in consideration of that fact, the price was reduced to $1,200. This same year his wealthy cousin Grenville Norcross, who had bought *The Fog Warning* the year before for $1,500, gave it to the Boston Museum, so that Homer was now represented in two leading public collections.

Below Zero, mentioned in his letter to Charles, shows two men with snowshoes and Eskimo fur coats standing in the snow watching mist rising from the sea—a phenomenon common during a cold wave when the air is much colder than the water. A small, quiet picture in a reserved key of whites, grays and gray-browns, it lacks the drama of his other winter scenes but conveys an intense feeling of stillness and bitter cold, of being at the end of the world. The last of these winter subjects was *High Seas* (later known as *Watching the Breakers: A High Sea*), dated 1896 but painted probably in 1894. This time two men and a woman stand on a snow-covered cliff gazing down at a great burst of spray from the fog-shrouded sea. Comparison with the first of the series, *Winter Coast*, shows how his palette had become clarified in these years. Where the grays of the earlier work had been sombre and neutral, now they were positive hues—grayed blue-green of the sea fading off into violet-gray mist, the ice-covered bushes pale lilac-gray—clear, delicate tones contrasting strongly with the dark brown rocks and figures. Here he has taken a small segment of the same kind of motif as in the big *Coast in Winter* and made something less ambitious but more intimate and intense.

VIII

As the years passed at Prout's Neck, Homer's solitary life face-to-face with the ocean made itself felt increasingly in his art. Humanity appeared less often, and his dominant theme became the sea. The years 1894 and 1895

brought forth a series of seascapes that were among his greatest works—*Storm-beaten, High Cliff, Cannon Rock* (pl. 41), *The Maine Coast* and *Northeaster* (pl. 40).

For painting the sea in cold or stormy weather he had a portable painting-house built, about eight by ten feet, set on runners so that it could be moved anywhere he wanted to work, and fitted with a large plate-glass window and a stove. Secure in this snug shelter he could paint in a storm when it would have been impossible to manage a sizable canvas outdoors, or he could get down close to the surf, protected from spray. And he was safe from intrusion; no one could look over his shoulder, a thing he particularly loathed.

He had always been a storyteller. Dramatic action was what interested him; and this the sea supplied, to take the place of human action. The straight storytelling of earlier works like *The Life Line* was now replaced by a less obvious kind—the drama of the sea and its never-ending battle with the land. Human actors gave way to the impersonal forces of nature, and his art gained thereby in reality.

It was the sea at its stormiest that he loved. John W. Beatty told how, one tempestuous day when no one else ventured forth, "Homer hurried into my room, robed from head to foot in rubber, and carrying in his arms a storm-coat and a pair of sailor's boots. 'Come!' he said, 'quickly! It is perfectly grand!' For an hour we clambered over rocks, holding fast to the wiry shrubs which grew from every crevice, while the spray dashed far overhead. This placid, reserved, self-contained little man was in a fever of excitement." Halcyon days of sunshine and blue sky and quiet water, favorite motif of the impressionists, had no appeal to him. One such day he spoke of the ocean contemptuously as "that duck pond down there." The power and peril of the sea were his themes. His favorite weather was high wind, stormy skies, fog and rain and heavy surf, when huge waves came swinging in out of the gray immensity to hurl themselves against the cliffs.

These seascapes of the middle 1890's take us right into the thick of things. Instead of the remote viewpoint and wide angle of most of his previous marines, we have a close-up of a small section of the shore. The point of view is low; we are on the rocks with the waves breaking right at our feet. The result is immediate, vivid physical sensation. We feel the menacing

movement of the wave as it advances and rises, the sheer force of these liquid tons, the weatherbeaten strength of the rocks, the violence of the struggle between these old adversaries. We seem to smell the salt, to feel the shock, to hear the roar of the onslaught, the long-drawn-out clamor of the retreat. We know the dread of fog and gale, and are pierced by a sense of the vast loneliness of the ocean. These great marines are among the most complete expressions of the power and tragic beauty of the sea that have ever been painted.

They marked an advance towards the direct-from-nature quality of his watercolors (no doubt due to his use of the portable painting-house). Handling was more spontaneous, color fresher. The rather conventional design of earlier oils had given way to a bolder, more original style of composition. The pictorial elements were on a larger scale. Waves, backrush, swirling foam, blowing spray, had a more energetic movement. The rock forms were more rugged and vigorous. Everything was clear-cut; there was no impressionistic vagueness. The forms of waves, even to the patterns of foam on them, were no less precisely drawn than the solid rocks. He was still fundamentally a draftsman, even in this most fluid of subjects.

The technique was broader than ever before, with a spontaneity approaching that of his watercolors—energetic, slashing brushstrokes, with a full brush, and an increased use of the palette knife. The pigment was fatter, contrasting with the thinness of earlier oils. Though the technique was still direct, without glazes, the brushwork was more varied to suit different textures and distances. But there was none of the display of manual cleverness now being introduced by Sargent, Chase and their school. His brushwork avoided slickness and remained firm, sober, solid—a technical mastery that subordinated display to the more important end of building forms.

Color was clearer and stronger. The warm grays that had overspread his oils in England had finally disappeared, as if a veil had been lifted. New tones appeared, especially on the cool side—blues, blue-grays, blue-greens—all the varied hues of water. Lights were lighter and darks deeper, giving a wider range from light to dark. His color was not yet as brilliant as in some watercolors, still austere compared to the gorgeousness that impressionism was bringing to the modern palette. His color schemes were still based to

some degree on gray; but instead of entering into every tone his grays now played their part as positive hues. It was a color range not rich but resonant, full-bodied, with a strong earthy sensuousness, and a selectivity that governed every tone. Color harmonies were not merely instinctive but consciously thought out.

These marines contrasted strongly with the prevailing tendencies of American landscape. The growing influence of French impressionism had combined with the characteristic American leaning towards sentiment to produce an art concerned exclusively with the tender, smiling aspects of nature. Into this perfumed atmosphere Homer's seascapes, with their masculine force, their sense of struggle, their love of nature's harsh and tragic moods, broke like the salt breath of an ocean gale.

At the opposite extreme from his naturalism was the art of America's other great painter of the sea, Albert Ryder. In his favorite image of a lonely boat sailing moonlit waters, Ryder expressed something about the sea that not even Homer did—not the sea in any specific place or weather, but the sea as it lives in the mind, an image of space and eternity, with the boat a symbol of man's wayfaring life. This symbolical element, which filled Ryder's tiny canvases with a sense of infinite space, was foreign to Homer's temperament. Homer gives us the physical force and changing moods of the sea; Ryder gives us its emotional essence. Of all American artists these two New Englanders, one pure naturalist, the other pure mystic, expressed the most profound vision of the sea—the sea that has always meant so much to New England.

Homer founded a school of American marine painting. His predecessors such as Kensett and Richards had pictured the sea in the conventionalized Hudson River school manner. He was the first to paint it with vigorous realism, and he influenced a whole generation of marine painters. It cannot be said, however, that any of them approached his stature. As usual, the artist who did the thing first did it best. In pure photographic naturalism a painter like Waugh far outdid him. Waugh had a cold mechanical proficiency that the older man never attained. His color was much brighter and cleaner and more "natural." Every ripple, every swirl, every bubble and foam-speck, were rendered with inhuman competence. The public's hunger for "detail"

was completely satisfied; hence the popular prize at the Carnegie Institute year after year. His pictures were miracles of photographic realism that the camera could not equal. But as Jean Charlot has said: "The more they look like waves the more awful they are, because they don't move." He bore the same relation to Homer that Bierstadt and Church did to their simpler predecessors; he carried Homer's naturalistic trend to its logical conclusion, producing works which are technical marvels but from which all art has evaporated.

In comparison Homer seems almost primitive, but how much more sympathetic! He had a gift for selection and simplification that Waugh utterly lacked. Instead of copying every ripple, he constructed the whole wave, its big form and movement, unencumbered by details. He was not trying to represent nature literally but to abstract her essentials. And these essentials were expressed in purely artistic terms, in terms of the picture as a physical object and not just an imitation of nature. He realized the sensuous basis of painting, and spoke through that. Many of his virtues that have been mentioned—observation, energy, masculinity—were also possessed by very mediocre painters. Energy without sensibility can be as bad as sensibility without energy—worse, indeed. Homer combined energy with sensibility, with an artistic sense that led him to purify his work of non-artistic elements, to aim at the values of art rather than of mere representation.

The first important exhibition of these new marines was at the Pennsylvania Academy show of 1895, which included *Northeaster*, *Storm-beaten* and *Wood's Island Light*, *Moonlight*. He was awarded the Academy Gold Medal of Honor—his first outstanding award—and his new work was enthusiastically received by the critics. John C. Van Dyke wrote in the New York *Evening Post*: "In individual strength and sureness of purpose there is no painter in America superior to Mr. Winslow Homer, and in painting the sea it is doubtful if he has an equal here or elsewhere." And *Scribner's Magazine* said: "Truly there is hope for a country that has produced a painter of such uncompromising honesty. Such art is a good foundation for the future —all the better that it is sometimes a little rude. But Mr. Homer has other claims upon our admiration than his independence: his Americanism, so pronounced that one might call him the Walt Whitman of our painters."

IX

In two famous paintings of 1896 Homer reverted to his sea-story vein of the 1880's. Indeed, the idea of *The Wreck* had been first conceived at that time. When painting *Eight Bells* he had done a study of a seaman and two women against a stormy sky, running up a sand dune, evidently in response to a call for help. This, now called *To the Rescue,* was the germ of *The Wreck,* as we can see by a letter to Clarke in October 1896: "After all these years I have at last used the subject of that sketch that I promised you, as being the size of and painted at the same time as the 'Eight Bells.' The picture that I have painted is called 'The Wreck,' and I have sent it to the Carnegie Art Gallery for exhibition. I did not use this sketch that I am about to send you, but used what I have guarded for years, that is, the subject which your sketch would suggest."

Two weeks later he wrote Clarke again: "I send to-day by the American Ex the long and much talked of Sketch that was made at the time of the Eight Bells. The date I was doubtful about (either 85 or 86). I considered on looking at it that it was much better left as it is than it would be made into a picture by figures in the distance, as it has a tone on it now that the ten years have given it and it also has the look of being made at once and it is interesting as a quick sketch from Nature. I only hope that you have not expected any more of a picture than this that you now receive. I wish it was better, but such as it is I now offer it to you. I would give you this with pleasure but I know your ideas on that point, so you can send me any time in the next ten years (the time you have so patiently waited) $250 two hundred & fifty dollars in payment for this sketch. I am very glad that you like my new picture [*The Wreck*]. I am painting others that I am sure you will like but I have very few pictures to put out as I must do as well if not better than that 'Storm Beaten' that has been out so long."

The Wreck (pl. 46) shows a lifesaving crew rushing a lifeboat over a beach towards high dunes, on which a breeches buoy line has already been set up. The wrecked ship cannot be seen, but violent bursts of spray and a group of spectators gazing and pointing out to sea convey the sense of disaster as vividly. This was an indirect device (like the stage convention of

describing a scene in the words of witnesses) that he had used increasingly of recent years. Earlier storytelling works such as *The Life Line* and *Undertow* had pictured the dramatic action itself; but in *The Wreck* as well as in *The Signal of Distress* the focus was on the spectators and rescuers. It was a subtler method, leaving more to the imagination, and a method better suited to his realistic temperament. With the years he had evidently come to realize that his pictorial gift was not suited to represent violent action, and he wisely chose to picture the subsidiary drama and to suggest the central one. This was all of a piece with his recent tendency away from storytelling.

Originally he included the masts of a schooner beyond the dunes, but thought better of it and painted them over. He once said to John W. Beatty, director of the Carnegie Institute, which owns the picture: "If you ever see a three-masted schooner coming through the sky, please let me know and I will fix it." His prophecy has proved correct, for a faint trace of a mast now appears through the spray.

The Wreck is one of his finest chromatic achievements. Leaden sky, dun-colored sand, brown bushes, slate-gray oilskins, make up a harmony of grays and tones close to gray. Almost a monochrome, it is so subtly varied, so exquisitely related, that the effect is one of great depth and strength of color, and one is hardly conscious of how close its range is. Its sombreness suits perfectly the grim sense of storm and foreboding that fills the picture and makes it one of Homer's most impressive works.

The Carnegie Institute had recently been founded in Pittsburgh, and Beatty, who had always admired Homer, was assembling its first international exhibition. The artist promised two paintings, but in September 1896 he wrote Beatty: "I have decided to send but one picture to your exhibition but that is the best one I have painted this year." On December 5th the awards were announced; *The Wreck* received the first prize for an American painting completed in 1896 and first shown in this exhibition—$5,000, the picture becoming the property of the Institute. This was the only year that the prize was given under these conditions. It was the most signal honor that Homer—or indeed almost any other American artist of the time—had received.

His letter of acknowledgement to the Institute was characteristically

modest; after thanking them for "this great honor," he added: "Although chance may have given me this distinguished place in your permanent exhibition (by the absence of many American Painters) I shall prove if possible by my future work, that your opinion & this award has not been misplaced." To Clarke's congratulations he replied: "It is certainly a most tremendous & unprecedented honor & distinction that I have received from Pittsburgh. Let us hope that it is not too late in my case to be of value to American Art in something that I may yet possibly do, from this encouragement." And to Mattie and Charlie he wrote: "I have been most deeply moved by the many expressions of friendship that I have received, as well as this great distinction conferred on me."

The honor made no change in his rooted aversion to publicity. "I have not been very well lately," he wrote Clarke next May, "the fact is I have had a most disagreeable winter—as the unusual prominence given me by my taking that prize has kept me very busy in matters quite outside of my painting, although the honor I received & especially the money will yet be of great service to me." Also to Clarke: "The article for that paper called the 'Outlook' I happened to hear of and I hope I stopped it. I have not the slightest interest in anything of that kind & I think *I* should have something to say about it, & if any labor has been lost I am glad of it—let these people mind their own business."

"Mr. Homer is not of a social nature," reported a magazine at this time, "and recently when one of our picture buyers wrote to him saying that he intended to make a trip to Scarboro, and would like to come to see him with a view to securing an important picture, the artist wrote back that he did not wish to see him, and had nothing to show him. If the gentleman desired one of his paintings he could find it in the exhibitions. This is an attitude few of our painters would care to take."

To 1896 belonged another well-known painting, for which his original title was *The Lookout—"All's Well, Lights All Up"* (pl. 47). A moonlit night at sea; a bearded seaman has struck the ship's bell and turns to call out his traditional cry. Behind him, the ornate bell and the foaming crests of waves, drenched in moonlight, and a deep star-studded sky. There is no overt drama as in his earlier sea stories, but in this everyday scene as in

Eight Bells he has concentrated all he had to say about the sea and the men who live on it, and their immemorial traditions.

He made careful preparations for the painting. In Boston he searched the waterfront shops for an old ship's bell of exactly the right kind; not finding one, he modelled it in clay. On another trip to Boston he went aboard a ship at night and studied the effect of moonlight on masts and rigging. A Scarboro fisherman, John Getchell, posed for the figure. Homer told Frank W. Benson that he had painted the entire picture by moonlight and never touched it by daylight. Considering how hard it is to distinguish colors by the light of the moon, one wonders whether this may not have been an example of leg-pulling. (Of another oil, *Moonlight, Wood's Island Light*, his nephew Arthur told Downes that one moonlit night, with a sea running but no wind, he and his uncle were sitting in front of the studio smoking, when suddenly the artist jumped up and said, "I've got an idea. Good night, Arthur," ran into the studio, got his painting things and went down to the shore, where he worked until one o'clock in the morning. Downes says that the painting, "like his other moonlight pictures, was painted wholly in and by the light of the moon, and never again retouched." This may have been true of this painting, which has all the marks of having been done direct from nature; but as to the others, one still wonders.)

More than almost any other figure piece, *The Lookout* shows his bigness of vision. It is full of action—the man throwing up his hand and crying out, the ship rolling, the swift-moving waves—all contrasted with the calm fixity of sky and stars. These movements have the quality characteristic of Homer, energetic and full of vitality, but short, abrupt, confined to individual figures and objects, rather than rhythms that run through the whole design. They show a sense of naturalistic movement that has not achieved plastic movement. The design is carefully thought out, and though not the work of a man highly sensitive to form, is an original, effective composition. The general tone is the deep blue-gray of a moonlight night, and all the separate hues—the sailor's coppery face, the bronzed bell, the silver foam, the translucent sky—are unified by this prevailing moonlight tone. Of all his paintings it has the closest relation of color and form.

The unusualness of the subject caused him misgivings as to its reception.

Sending it to Doll & Richards in February 1897, he priced it at only $850, and was willing to take $600 net for it. His old friend John La Farge, now president of the Society of American Artists, was urging him to exhibit at the Society, something he had never done. In March he wrote Clarke: "Your letter rec'd. I have a letter & telegram from Mr. La Farge asking for one or more pictures. By good luck I happen to have one that I have not shown & I have ordered it sent to N. Y. The title is 'The Lookout' [sketch] a moonlight at sea. You will be interested in it as it will be so unexpected & strange. It was one of the two that I was to send to Pittsburgh but I concluded it would not be understood by any but myself & so I only sent one and kept this, in doubt if I would show it anywhere, but I sent it recently to Doll & Richards in Boston for them to show it privately to some Cunarder people and to find out if it was good for anything and could be understood. They report that 'They greatly admire it.' So I send it to La Farge for his exhibition. I think with you that your pictures have been shown enough for the present.

"I have another new picture now at the Rhode Island School of Design, Providence. I sent it to them for the opening of their new Gallery. I have written Mr. La Farge that he can have that early in April. You will like it, much. 'A Coast Scene.' The same old story only much better.

"You mention the idea of a group of my work. That is something in this connection that must be postponed for at least *ten years*, and due notice given me."

To Charles he reported: "These are tough days. Very cold. Deep snow. I am glad that I returned here as soon as I did as I was in time to answer a request for pictures for the Society of American Artists, & as I found in Boston that they like that 'Lookout' the 'Man with the Bell' I have sent them that & Saco Bay. Other things, big things, are booming. I have made $100 cash. $120 of it will go for frames & that is my seasons profit."

The painting at the Rhode Island School of Design was *The Maine Coast*, now in the Metropolitan Museum. Clarke saw both pictures before the opening of the Society exhibition, and telegraphed Homer for his price on them. The artist asked $800 each, which Clarke agreed to. A few days later Homer wrote him: "I am glad that you have found some pleasure in these two pic-

tures. The coast scene was called when it left me 'Maine Coast.' I sent it to Providence after submitting it to your friend O. H. Darrell at his store in Boston. He did not like it for $750 but they liked it very much at Providence & asked the price which I gave them at $800 making $50 out of O. H. Darrell.

"The 'Lookout' I sent to Doll & Richards for two weeks only (private gallery) with a net value to me of 6 or 7 hundred dollars—so I have made perhaps $200 out of them. Now these profits that I have made out of you on these two pictures, should pay a *commission to the Society* on this sale as they were sold from their Gallery. I will go $100 on it, & you put up $60 and send me when you get ready $1500. . . . I think that in Mr. Darrell's case that I did as you would have me after you had given him a letter to me. I waited until I had what I thought a good picture & then put a low price on it."

A third painting in the exhibition, *Saco Bay,* (now called *Sunset, Saco Bay*) was purchased for $1,000 by the Lotos Club of New York out of a fund for the encouragement of American art; so Homer had scored a grand slam. These three oils were the first he had shown in any large New York exhibition for nine years, and public interest was keen. The critics gave him more attention than any other artist and almost unanimously acclaimed the pictures, except *Saco Bay,* which was generally condemned. *The Lookout* received the highest praise. The *Art Interchange* said: "In this work he rises to heights of unquestioned greatness. . . . The picture is one to come back to again and again." Sadakichi Hartmann wrote: "It is one of the few paintings of which I carried away a recollection that will resist the tide of time, and should I ever in day-dreams recall the Society exhibition of this year, 'The Lookout' will surely present itself first. All the rest will sink into oblivion."

The critic of the *Tribune* was more qualified in his approval, saying that the picture was an improvement over Homer's usual "carelessness," but that "his color is still to seek in this canvas. One regrets that he does not frankly adopt some monotone process—etching, for example—and make pictures unqualifiedly good." This was too much for Downes in Boston. "Heaven forbid!" he replied in the *Transcript.* "It is one of Homer's least agreeable paintings; he seems to care less and less to make things agreeable

as he grows older; but it is one of his most impressive and original works, . . . fascinating in its absolute, unrelieved, heroic ugliness."

X

In his figure paintings of the middle and late 1890's, women appeared only rarely, and these few were no longer the elegant young ladies of earlier years but sturdy fisherwomen reminiscent of his English girls. In *Fog*, later called *The Fisher Girl*, dated 1894, a robust young woman with a net over her shoulder, enshrouded in fog, gazes out to sea. The design is elementary—the girl in the exact center, with emptiness all around—but the monumental figure is impressive. The picture was a favorite of Homer's and during the ten years it remained on his hands he repainted it at least twice. In 1904 he wrote Burton Mansfield, who had just bought it, that it was "a most careful study direct from nature of the best single figure that I remember having painted."

Sunset, Saco Bay, a small canvas of 1896, shows two fisherwomen of the Tynemouth type on a ledge of rocks against a fiery sky reflected in a glassy sea. In this case the figures are subordinate to the seascape. In looseness of handling and boldness of color this was one of his most impressionistic works. "Although I have painted on this up to three days of sending it out," he wrote Clarke in November 1896, "I have had it on hand and observed & studied this particular point and picture for the past ten years. This will account for the cost price that I have put on it. It will not sell, but I have some others that will pay me, & make it possible for me to show a work of this merit, which I now call your attention to. P. S. This above, would seem that W Homer has a great opinion of himself but it is *the picture* that I am talking about." This opinion was not shared by the critics, who complained of its "loose execution and blatant magenta sky," "the falsity of values in the crimson-edged clouds, which do not stay in place and are lacking in atmosphere. . . . It is signed by a great painter, but it is one of his slips." In spite of this, it was one of the three paintings sold at the Society of American Artists exhibition of 1897, as we have seen.

In *A Light on the Sea*, finished in the fall of 1897, a fisherwoman, who

might be the same model as in *Fog*, is walking on rocks at the water's edge. It is a dark day, but the sun breaking through the lowering sky casts a white light on the sea far out, against which the figure is darkly silhouetted. The color is sombre and cold, prevailing gray but with tones of purple, violet, ochre, olive-green—hues strange and unexpected, having his characteristic combination of dry austerity and earthy, almost brutal power. The peculiar light and color are something seen firsthand, in nature and not in other art. The whole picture is odd and original—the woman's awkward attitude, the strange light, the grim color—but it has unquestionable power.

This was his last painting in which a woman appeared. Even in these three works, women were seen quite without sexual feeling. Physically they were like men, outdoors, tanned, hardy, without a trace of feminine charm. In his attitude towards them there was neither sentiment nor sensuousness. The warmth and intimacy that had begun to appear in the work of his middle years had vanished, together with his delicate feeling for individual character. These women were types, not individuals—survivals of his English days, curiously unreal as compared to his men. The idea of them as fisherwomen, and their relation to nature, interested him more than their quality as human beings. One thinks of the human penetration of Eakins, the sensuous warmth of Manet and Renoir, even the mordant analysis of Degas and Toulouse-Lautrec, and one sees that something profound and vital had passed out of Homer's life. Sex, a central element in man's emotional attitude towards the world, and one of the roots of art, with him had become severely sublimated. Human emotion was avoided, and all his great vitality was channelled into the picturing of external nature, with increasing mastery but no greater passion. It is not farfetched to connect this lack of human emotion with the relative externality of his art, its lack of inner heat, its limitations in plasticity and movement.

XI

Searching for fresh camping and fishing grounds, Winslow and Charles Homer visited Quebec in 1893 and became members of the Tourilli Fish and Game Club on Lake Tourilli near St. Raymond. The club was in deep

forest, miles from any settlement, and reached by a blazed trail. In a still more remote spot on the lake the brothers had a log cabin built, and here they spent part of almost every summer for a number of years. Starting off into "the bush" with four or five guides (Winslow preferred Indians), carrying all their provisions, including plenty of whiskey, rum and tobacco, they would spend several weeks completely cut off from civilization. The region was a network of lakes and streams, and most of the travelling was by canoe. "I want two guides in the boat and one on the road," wrote Charles one year, "so that in traversing the portages one man will be with me to repair damages as my bones are getting brittle with age."

The club's secretary, George Van Felson, who used to make all the arrangements, got to know the brothers well. "We were more than friends," he said. "They treated me with the affection of a father." Winslow, he said, was "passionately fond of fishing," and an expert angler. He often spoke of the beauty of the Tourilli trout, which had a sheen that faded a few minutes after they were landed. Once after doing him a service, Van Felson received as a gift a watercolor of a leaping trout, inscribed, "From Winslow Homer, Artist," doubtless to distinguish him from Homer the angler. "He was the typical Bohemian," Van Felson said. "In the midst of a conversation he would drop the subject and as if in a trance rush to some point of vantage to seize the effects of a sun ray or shadow."

On his 1893 visit to Quebec he did no painting as far as we know. In June 1895 he wrote Charles from Maine: "I shall be through with my work by July & shall loaf about in different places. Canada preferred." But he could not have done much loafing. No less than twenty-six watercolors (twelve of them in black and white) date from this summer, and fourteen from 1897 —among his finest achievements in the medium. Some, including most of the monochromes, were done at Lake Tourilli, where he kept a twelve-foot flat-bottomed boat, specially built, used for both fishing and painting. The nearby Ste. Anne River was the scene of *The Portage* (pl. 43), showing his favorite guide, Sam Picard, carrying a canoe past the rapids.

Most of them, however, were painted on Lake St. John, the big lake about a hundred miles north of Quebec City, haunt of the redoubtable ouananiche or landlocked salmon. Settling at Roberval on the west shore,

he would combine fishing and art, picturing fellow anglers on the bosom of the lake playing the ouananiche, or the Montagnais Indian squaws building canoes in their camp at Pointe Bleue. From Lake St. John rises the Saguenay River, issuing in the spectacular Grande Décharge and flowing for miles through rocky gorges in rapids navigable only by the most skilled canoeists. Here were new and picturesque subjects, and some of his best watercolors show the husky French-Canadian and Indian woodsmen shooting the rapids—poised at the entrance where the smooth water bears them swiftly onward; or fighting the full fury of the river, guiding their canoes with tense skill through the turbulent rock-studded current; or fishing in the boiling pool below the falls at Grande Décharge, their boats looking small and frail in the huge turmoil.

Once Homer paid a guide ten dollars to shoot the rapids so that he could observe him from the shore. Posting himself at a good spot, he waited and waited, but no canoe appeared. Finally he returned to camp, found the guide and demanded why he hadn't showed up. "Mr. Charles paid me ten dollars not to," was the reply—a fair sample of the jokes the brothers were always playing on each other.

These new scenes contrasted strongly with those in the Adirondacks. Instead of small still lakes, here were big Lake St. John and the turbulent Saguenay. Instead of quiet fishing, here were guides shooting rapids. The wilder, more strenuous spirit of the region soon made itself felt in his art. The first summer's work carried forward the style of his preceding summer in the Adirondacks, but by 1897 a new power was manifest. Never had his watercolors shown so much energy and movement, conveying the force of swift-moving water, the tense muscularity of woodsmen. They were the most dynamic watercolors he had done, concerned less with mood than with action. The drawing was swift and sure, combining grasp of action with the utmost precision. His bigness of form had now reached its full development; the figures were not only larger in scale, but seen with the greatest breadth and simplification. There was more light than in his Adirondack work, partly because of the nature of the subjects—no longer dark wooded lakes but the openness of Lake St. John. Forms were now seen in an even, revealing illumination which modelled them in greater relief. The vision was less

photographic and more graphic, with less emphasis on appearances and more on structure. His color was bolder than ever before. Not that it was brilliant; under overcast northern skies and in cool northern light it remained reserved. Even in full sunlight it did not approach the high key of impressionism. *The Portage*, one of his richest works, was deep rather than brilliant. With no trace of sweetness, it always kept a certain sobriety and dryness, a penchant for grayed and earthy hues. But within this restricted gamut it attained a full-bodied, deeply sensuous power. More thought and selectivity were evident, and it achieved harmonies of a resonance new in his work.

These Canadian watercolors met with little popular success at first. When ten of the 1895 ones were exhibited at the St. Botolph Club in Boston in November 1895, priced at $250 and $300, only three were sold, the rest being returned to him by Doll & Richards the following March. Of eight more that he sent the firm next October only one was sold, for $100.

In late 1897, when he served on a jury at Carnegie Institute, Beatty asked him to allow the Institute to hold an exhibition of these Canadian works. Homer selected with great care a group of twenty-seven, half of them his latest works, never shown outside of Boston. "I think that you will find they are quite enough to represent me as a collection of water colors," he wrote Beatty, "& I have no oil pictures now on hand that I can send. As you have plenty of room I think if it is convenient for you, that the best place in your Galleries for a small show is on the Wall *that was behind us* when the Committee met & passed on pictures. That is the best light that I remember & would be just about large enough for two deep of my water colors. You know you can always get light by taking the soot off the glass on your roof. P. S. You will find that the men of Pittsburg will like these things & the women will be curious to know what the men are liking & first thing you know you will have an audience."

He had told Beatty: "They are not for sale. I shall keep the collection to-gether until later." And to Clarke: "I shall show them in New York in March when I may or not offer them for sale. My idea is to keep them in one collection for some Institution to buy the lot. In the meantime show them." Knoedler & Company had now replaced Reichard as his New York dealer and it was here that the group was shown. For the exhibition he priced

them from $100 up, averaging around $250 to $350, the highest being $400 —the most he had asked for watercolors since his big English ones, showing what he thought of them. But incredible as it may seem, not a single one was sold in New York. It is ironical to note that *The Portage,* which brought $15,700 at auction twenty-nine years later, was priced at $200 in this exhibition—and found no purchaser. All of which showed how slow the public was to keep up with his growth.

The Knoedler exhibition also included his latest painting, *Wild Geese,* one of his most original conceptions. Early morning, just before sunrise; over the sand dunes a flock of geese is winging; two of them lie dead on the sand. Homer's original title, *Under the Lighthouse,* shows how they came by their death. Against the pale gold sky and gray-brown dunes, the bird's handsome black, white and gray plumage has its full decorative effect. The picture is almost a monochrome in golden browns, a deliberate and knowledgeable color scheme reminding one of Whistler in its conscious limitation to a restricted gamut. This was his last oil for a year and a half or more.

XII

Winslow Homer as he reached his sixties was still slender, carrying himself very erect, dressing neatly, energetic and decided in manner, speaking briefly but to the point, with something remotely military in his deportment. The high, bald head, prominent aquiline nose, keen, impassive gaze, sweeping moustaches, determined chin, made up a face strong in character. On his rare appearances in society he was dressed with the utmost care, with a high collar, derby hat, a flower in his buttonhole. He looked nothing like the popular idea of an artist; as a friend said, "To look at him one could not imagine him painting." Harrison Morris, director of the Pennsylvania Academy, meeting him for the first time when he served on the Academy jury in 1896, noted: "He was polite, modest, simple, without side. . . . Here was the essence of gentlemanly elegance. . . . He might have been taken for a successful stock broker."

In 1897 the Carnegie Institute started a system of choosing its jury of award by vote of the exhibiting artists, who received ballots listing fifty-

eight painters willing to serve. Homer, having consented to have his name appear, received the highest number of votes. The others selected were La Farge, Will Low, Chase, Benson, Tarbell, Cecilia Beaux, Duveneck, Edwin Lord Weeks of Paris and John M. Swan of London. The jury met in Pittsburgh in the middle of October and sat for four days. This was the first time Homer had met some of his distinguished colleagues. The only woman member, Cecilia Beaux, recalled: "The officers of the Institute were untiring in their attentions to all of us. The weather being fine, it was proposed, on our arrival, that we should drive about and see the town, which none of us had visited before. Four barouches were drawn up at the door of our hotel, and into the first of these Mr. La Farge, Mr. Caldwell, the President of the Institute, a mysterious stranger, and I were invited to ascend. I sat in the Queen's place, Mr. La Farge beside me. Opposite rode Mr. Caldwell, full of explanation and courtesy, the ambiguous person beside him. This personage I took to be a high official in the world of the Institute, or of coal or steel. He was a spare, oldish man, with a short, dark, almost unnaturally dark, moustache. Everything he wore, and even his cane, was new; gloves, necktie, hat, suit, never had been worn before, and seemed to oppress the wearer a little. He remained absolutely silent during the drive. . . .

"I was still wondering about the unknown man who had driven with us. He looked, I whispered to myself, as a diamond expert might, if I had ever seen one. There was something intense, observant, in his quiet. His new clothes seemed like a disguise. I inquired of Mr. Beatty, who was the operating angel of our destiny. Mr. Beatty looked at me in wonder—'Why, Winslow Homer, of course!' He was amazed that I did not know, had not met him. Until nearly the end of our labors, which, with the entertainment so generously provided, filled every moment of the day and a good deal of the night, Winslow Homer maintained his silent attention to duty. He came and went, voted and endured, until nearly the end, when he became restless and finally confided to one of the men that he grudged every minute now passing. He had planted nine stands of corn (as models, of course); they would be now exactly ready—that is, just dry and ripe enough for his plan for painting. They might be ruined by a storm, or be in some way *hors concours*. He also would have liked to depart when, and how, he pleased.

The greatest care was being taken to provide everything in the best manner to save us all trouble in leaving. As we walked, for I, too, was a little impatient: 'I could have bought my own ticket,' said Winslow Homer."

Frank Benson recalled that Homer showed much interest in the pictures submitted to the jury and was very conscientious in performing his duties. Towards the end, when everybody showed signs of fatigue, Beatty invited them for an excursion to see the great steel works at Homestead. The suggestion was welcomed by everyone but Homer, who said: "Mr. Beatty, I came here to work, and if we go to Homestead it will delay us, and I want to get home as soon as I can, for if I am late my father will be anxious about me."

The following spring Beatty asked him to allow his name to appear again on the ballot for jurors, but received this reply: "I desire to say that next autumn & in the month of October I wish to paint a picture in which Indian corn is the principal motive & I must decline to have my name on your list for this year." This Indian corn picture, also mentioned by Miss Beaux, is a mystery. No sketch of it exists, and one suspects that it was an invention of Homer's to get out of jury duty. Next year he refused again, saying that it would be "most inconvenient" for him to serve, and the year after he again declined.

In the summer of 1898 old Father Homer, so solicitously cared for by his son, died at the age of almost ninety. The Reverend Andrew J. Graham, minister of the Episcopal church at Prout's Neck, recalls that he was sent for when the end was near, and the old man "asked if I would give him the Holy Communion. I hesitated a bit, telling him that the Episcopal Church expected Confirmation to precede the reception of the Sacrament. Mr. Homer was reared in the Congregational Church and had no use for Confirmation. Although very ill he at once began arguing against the need of Confirmation. I told him that though not confirmed, yet under the circumstances, I would administer the Sacrament. He refused to receive it unless I would admit that Confirmation was altogether unnecessary. Being a clergyman of the Episcopal Church I could not do that, and so he passed on without the Holy Communion."

Winslow had watched over his father to the end. Answering Beatty's

invitation to exhibit, he said: "My time has been so taken by overlooking my father that I have not painted anything." A month later he wrote Clarke: "I am notifying certain people who I may expect to hear from in the next six months that I shall not be in Scarboro Maine. That will be my address however but nothing will be read until next Spring when I shall return to Scarboro. My mail is not worth one dollar per year to me *in cash*. I shall not leave here before December & then I may go through New York & will see you. If you could settle up for those two pictures, (I mean the balance due me) it would pay my expenses & leave my old age fund complete. My Father who has prevented any travel on my part of recent years died on August 22nd (89 years five months) in his 90th year." And to Beatty he wrote: "I go somewhere in the West Indies."

XIII

The 1890's saw Homer take his place in public estimation among the chief living American painters. They also saw a gradual gain in financial success, although this did not keep pace with his growing reputation. Not that his work did not sell. Of the twenty-nine oils he painted from 1890 through 1897, fourteen were sold within a year or two after they were finished, and about five more within five or six years, leaving about ten which took longer to find purchasers, the latter including such important works as *A Summer Night*, *Hound and Hunter*, *High Cliff*, *Cannon Rock* and *Northeaster*. But his prices remained low. In the 1880's *The Life Line* had brought $2,500 and *Undertow* $2,400, but as far as we know he did not get these prices again for years. The $1,500 that his cousin Grenville Norcross paid for *The Fog Warning* in 1893 was the highest known figure for some time, the other recorded sales prices ranging from there down to $750, averaging around $1,000.

As we have seen, he exhibited little in New York in the 1890's. Only at Reichard's or in club exhibitions could his work be seen. It was at the Century, the Union League, the Manhattan, the New York Athletic and the Lotos Clubs that his pictures were most frequently shown, lent by Clarke and Evans and other collectors. The general public had little chance to see

these shows, which like most art activities of the day were confined to the upper level of wealth and culture.

In 1898 ten artists—Benson, De Camp, Dewing, Hassam, Metcalf, Reid, Simmons, Tarbell, Twachtman and Alden Weir—all in some degree exponents of the impressionist movement that had finally reached these shores, formed an informal group for exhibiting, calling themselves "Ten American Painters." Weir invited Homer to join the group, but the older man replied: "On receiving your letter I am reminded of the time lost in my life in not having an opportunity like this that you offer. The chance that each member will have of showing their work in a group, the larger the better, and under their own direction will be a great spur in tempting them to great effort and enterprise. I know on my own part that I have been kept from the Academy exhibitions by the fear of the corridor and the impropriety of my trying to make terms as to placing my work.

"You do not realize it, but I am too old for this work and I have already decided to retire from business at the end of the season. So you see that I cannot join you at even this most cordial invitation, and admiring as I do all of you. You see it would oblige me to work, at this late day, when I wish to make the most of the few years I have left."

It is amusing to think that the man who wrote this had not yet painted *The Gulf Stream*, *On a Lee Shore*, *West Point*, *Early Morning after a Storm at Sea*, or his most brilliant watercolors. From this time on we will find him at increasingly frequent intervals swearing that he would never paint again; and a few days later announcing triumphantly that he had just done his best picture.

In March 1898 Clarke arranged an exhibition at the Union League Club of fifty pictures by Inness and Homer from his collection, twenty-five by each artist. The fifteen Homer oils, all he owned, included *The Life Line*, *Eight Bells*, *The West Wind*, *Coast in Winter*, *The Gale*, *The Maine Coast* and *The Lookout*, besides such early works as *The Two Guides* and *The Carnival*. The show proved to be one of the sensations of the art season, so much so that it was thrown open to the public and continued all summer. This, the most important exhibition so far of Homer's work and the first opportunity to view it in retrospect, called forth the longest reviews to

date, and the most eulogistic. Critics were unanimous that he was one of the top living painters, on a level with Inness, dead four years and already canonized. For the first time the word "great" was freely used. The *Sun* said that the exhibition "shows how personal is the talent of this great artist, and affirms his right, long since conceded, to be counted in the list of the best names our art has to show. We may, in all justice to every other famous American name, attribute to these two men, Inness and Homer, the distinction of being the ones that would first come to mind if we were asked by a foreigner what we have that is individual and great in art. There is something in the work of both that is national, something that belongs to us."

"Both men stand forward with all their virtues and demerits," wrote Royal Cortissoz in the most perceiving review. "It is no exaggeration to say that the latter are so few that at the end, as at the beginning, of a careful study of the collection, one is convinced that he is in the presence of two absolute masters. . . . But there is an important distinction between the two men. Inness, master as he was, carried on what might be called the tradition of French naturalistic landscape. . . . Winslow Homer stands alone, and is, on the whole, as rare a figure as Millet, or Delacroix, or Fortuny, or Whistler. . . . He broke new ground, painted familiar subjects as no one had ever painted them before him, so that he seems to move in a world of his own."

The exhibition proved a prelude to a greater event—the sale at auction of the entire Clarke collection in February 1899. Totalling 372 pictures, all American, including thirty-nine Innesses and thirty-one Homers (fifteen oils and sixteen watercolors), it was the most important auction of American art so far. The common disbelief in the money value of our art was shown by the fact that the dealers, who haunted sales of European pictures, were conspicuous by their absence. But the audience was an enthusiastic one, greeting each famous work by Inness or Homer with applause and bidding them up to new record prices. The top figures, naturally, were brought by artists no longer living, the four highest by Inness, $10,150, $8,100, $6,100 and $5,600, and the fifth by Homer Martin, $5,500. But the sixth, seventh and eighth went to Homers—$4,700 for *Eight Bells*, $4,500 for *The Life Line*, and $4,400 for *The Maine Coast*—as well as the tenth and eleventh—$3,650 for *Moonlight, Wood's Island Light* and $3,200 for *The Lookout*. Of the

fifteen highest-priced pictures, eight were Innesses, five Homers. Among living men Homer's prices were by far the highest. (On the other hand there were no Whistlers or Sargents, and the examples of La Farge, Chase and Eakins were unimportant. Ryder's *Temple of the Mind* brought $2,250 and his *Christ Appearing to Mary*, $1,000.) *The Lookout* went to the Boston Museum, also a watercolor—his first to be bought by a museum. The Metropolitan Museum bid up to $4,400 on *The Life Line* but let it go to George W. Elkins of Philadelphia. The watercolors, none more recent than 1892, averaged around $200.

Clarke made handsome profits on most of his Homer oils. *Eight Bells* was said to have cost him only $400, and he had paid $800 each for *The Maine Coast* and *The Lookout*, $750 for *The Gale*, which sold for $1,625, and $250 for *To the Rescue*, which fetched $650. Only on some of the early works were prices low: *The Carnival* and *A Visit from the Old Mistress*, which cost him $1,000 for the two, brought only $220 and $320. Present-day taste agrees more with Clarke's than with the public's estimate of these early works.

The Clarke sale was a landmark in the history of American art. In the old days a few Hudson River panoramas had fetched higher prices, but the Clarke sale set new records for the work of Homer's generation. Before this the general feeling had been that while it was a nice thing to encourage American art, "there was no money in it." The Clarke sale gave native painting the kind of prestige the American public respected most—that of dollars and cents. As the *Sun* said the day after: "Is it surprising that there is exultation in the air; that there are so many people abroad who have the air of being an inch or more taller than heretofore, or that American art as an institution is confessed?" " 'Nativism' in art seems to have arrived," said the *Press*.

Homer of course received no direct financial benefit from the sale. But the indirect benefit was great. The sale established him as one of the most financially eligible of living Americans. And the wide gap between the auction prices and what he had been asking, gave him a new confidence in his monetary value. Although only three or four times was he to receive anything approaching the top prices of the Clarke sale, and then only in his last years, at least he knew better than to ask only $800 for works as important as *The Lookout* and *The Maine Coast*.

This financial benefit was immediate. In March Doll & Richards exhibited precisely the same group of Canadian watercolors that had been shown at Knoedler's a year earlier without a single sale. Out of twenty-seven, fourteen were sold during the two weeks of the show at prices around $250 to $400 for a total gross of $4,100. Three were acquired by the Boston Museum. That same month *Wild Geese* was bought by Mrs. Roland C. Lincoln of Boston for $1,500—his first known sale of an oil in two years.

Thus, at sixty-three, Homer had finally arrived—in popular fame, in critical esteem, and in money value.

He had spent the winter in Nassau, and from Florida he wrote Clarke on February 25th, the day after his birthday: "Owing to the delay in the mails I have only just received the news of the great success of your sale. I owe it to you to express to you my sincere thanks for the great benefit that I have received from your encouragement of my work & to congratulate you. . . . Only think of my being *alive* with a reputation (that you have made for me.)"

VIII

OLD AGE

HOMER's visit to Nassau in the winter of 1898 to 1899 was the first time he had been there, as far as we know, since 1885. He stayed three months, working in watercolor. By February 25th he was in Florida, whence he wrote Clarke: "I have had a most successful winter at Nassau. I found what I wanted & have many things to work up into *two paintings* that I have in mind. I shall not go North until it is warmer but I am through work for the winter & desire to report myself *very well*."

As before, Nassau was a liberating experience. The paganism that had tentatively appeared in his early Bahaman work found its fullest expression in his new watercolors. This dry, matter-of-fact Yankee, confronted with the sunlight and color and primitiveness of the Bahamas, revealed an unexpected strain of barbaric brilliancy. Again the negroes' carefree life appealed most strongly to him—stalwart black boys diving for sponges in the clear blue water, racing along the beach to catch turtles, lolling on the decks of their white fishing sloops; and in contrast to these sun-baked idylls, the tropical violence of a hurricane, and its aftermath, a dead negro cast up on the beach beside his splintered boat. The superb beauty of the black bodies and the spectacle of this free life in such a setting gave these works, with all their realism, that pagan spirit that we call Greek. It is remarkable that Homer was in his middle sixties when he painted these pictures, so youthful in their joy in sunlight and outdoors and physical activity.

In color they were his most brilliant works. Once more the Bahamas proved a revelation—the varied blues of the southern sea, ranging from turquoise in the shallows to violet at the horizon; mahogany bodies, white walls, terra-cotta houses, scarlet hibiscus—all seen under intense sunlight. Where his earlier Nassau work had been high in key but not strong in color, now the light was unveiled, bringing out tones to the full. A new audacity appeared in his color schemes; here as in everything else he had learned economy of means, how to secure the maximum effect by bold, simple combinations. The whole picture was now built chromatically. But a characteristic severity still

governed his color; it remained earthy and powerful rather than rich. Even these most brilliant of all his works were far from the sumptuousness of Renoir or Monet. Whereas the impressionists secured their chief contrasts between colors rather than between lights and darks, his work was still based on values, using a full range of tones from white down to the darkest. This, a result of his early experience as a black-and-white artist, had characterized his style from the first. As he said to Beatty: "I have never tried to do anything but get the proper relationship of values; that is, the values of dark and light and the values of color. It is wonderful how much depends upon the relationship of black and white. Why, do you know, a black and white if properly balanced, suggests color."

His handling had never been freer, his brush drawing surer, combining swiftness and absolute control. The touch was square, energetic, somewhat obvious, but masterly. In this most delicate of mediums he was attaining almost the force of his oils, and much more luminosity. In *Rum Cay* (pl. 50) even the negro's head with its highlights that look as if flicked in with a brush, so crisp and well-formed, is entirely transparent. Sargent with all his brilliancy was incapable of such strength; he would have made the picture all clever illusion, but Homer kept the balance between naturalistic appearances and solidity.

In watercolor his temperament found its perfect medium. Always essentially a graphic artist, his swift grasp of reality found full play in it. His watercolors contain the essence of his genius—the first fresh impact of nature on the eye, recorded in all its purity, unspoiled by labor. The transparency of the medium, with the white paper showing through, gave them a luminosity he never achieved in oil. The oil medium is a far more complex one and offers richer technical potentialities, but these he never exploited to the full. To the end of his life his oil technique remained direct and opaque—masterly within its limits but falling short of the full richness of which the medium is capable. Though constantly approaching the brilliancy of his watercolors, his oils never quite attained it; he grew old and stopped painting before they could. He himself must have been conscious of this, for he once said to Charles R. Henschel of Knoedler's: "You will see, in the future I will live by my watercolors."

A pioneer in the medium, Homer was our greatest watercolorist of the later nineteenth century. Most of his contemporaries who used the medium did so only incidentally. Eakins' watercolors were superior to his in substance and structure, but they were few and early and did not express his mature genius as Homer's did. Of this generation only Homer and La Farge made watercolor as important as their work in oil. The two men had many similarities, but deeper differences. La Farge's art was the product of a richly cultivated mind, creating art out of its knowledge of other art, whereas Homer's was the product of a superb natural gift for extracting art direct from reality. He had the deeply physical vitality that cannot be compensated for by knowledge. Technically he was far in advance of any other contemporary—a master of every trick of the craft, always keeping the medium pure and transparent, without resorting to opaque painting as even La Farge and Eakins did. He was the only American watercolorist of his time who seemed completely professional. The simple natural force, easy and sure, that was manifest in his work, placed him in a class by himself. His mature watercolors, entirely different from any that had preceded them in this country, had a wide and liberating influence, marking the beginning of today's vigorous school of American watercolor painting.

In the winter of 1899 to 1900 he visited Bermuda, and probably again in 1901. Here he painted another series of watercolors, landscapes and seascapes instead of figure pieces—bare moors looking down on the sea, with passing steamers on the horizon; white houses against blue waters; the strange rock formations along the shore. The style was a continuation of that of Nassau, but with the cooler, quieter tone of the northern island.

He thought highly of his Nassau and Bermuda watercolors. To O'Brien, the Chicago dealer, he wrote in 1902: "I have many watercolors, 'Two Winters in the West Indies,' and as good work, with the exception of one or two etchings, as I ever did." It was several years before he put them on the market. At the Pan-American Exposition in 1901 he chose to be represented by them only, sending twenty-one "Scenes from the Bahamas and the Bermudas," priced at $4,000 for the group. They were awarded a gold medal. After the exhibition he had them returned, writing Knoedler: "That makes my winter's work of 1898 & 1899 *complete*. I shall leave them boxed

as they are until such a time as I see fit to put them out. The price will be $400 *each!!* for choice if I ever put them out again." But he did not adhere strictly to this resolution. In June and July 1902 he sent Knoedler fourteen watercolors, some old, some new, including such fine examples of his latest phase as *Rum Cay*, *The Turtle Pound* and *After the Tornado*, noting in his daybook: "Murder comes now. To net me $200 each & all, good or bad, large or small." In December 1907 he gave the Chicago dealer James W. Young ten watercolors, including some late ones. "I will not bother giving you different prices for these," he wrote, "some being very good and others quite bad. They must each one net me one hundred dollars."

But most of his Nassau and Bermuda watercolors remained hanging in his studio. He refused to dispose of them, intending to offer them to some institution where they could be kept together as a permanent record of his best work in the medium. The Metropolitan Museum asked to have first choice and he agreed, but at his death nothing had been decided. Charles Homer, knowing his brother's wishes, allowed the Metropolitan to purchase twelve on generous terms; hence the pre-eminent group now owned by the museum. Other fine examples went to the Worcester and Brooklyn Museums.

II

From his Nassau visit resulted his most famous painting, *The Gulf Stream* (pl. 52). This picture of a negro lying on the deck of his helpless boat, waiting apathetically for inevitable death from starvation, thirst, the waterspout or the sharks, is the last and finest variation on his favorite theme of the perils of the sea, less heroic and more realistic than the earlier ones, with an added touch of irony in the warm tropical sunlight and the blue southern sea. The eye-freshening that Nassau had given him showed in the color, the most brilliant in any oil so far, especially the varied range of blues in the water. While still without true glazing, the variety and power of its brushwork made it one of his greatest technical achievements.

In September 1899 he reported to Beatty: "I have not painted any in oil since I painted that Wild Goose picture a year ago last March. I painted in water colors three months last winter at Nassau, & have now just commenced

arranging a picture from some of the studies." But actually its sources go back to his first Nassau trip in 1885, when he had done a watercolor of a dismasted sloop wallowing in the sea, with a school of sharks hovering hungrily about it. Four years later, perhaps with an oil in mind, he combined this sketch and another 1885 one in a watercolor of the same boat, this time with a negro aboard. But it was ten years more before the painting materialized.

When the director of the Pennsylvania Academy, Harrison Morris, requested it for his exhibition opening in January 1900, the painter refused, twice. But Morris telegraphed: "The greatest American art exhibition cannot open without an example from the greatest American artist," and Homer yielded, sending it before it was finished, with a note: "Don't let the public poke its nose into my picture." After its return he worked on it further, writing to Beatty next September: "I have painted on the picture since it was in Philadelphia & improved it very much (more of the Deep Sea water than before)." Turning it over to Knoedler, he priced it at $4,000 less twenty per cent commission—by far his highest figure to date, proving the effect of the Clarke sale. "Show it for all its worth, in the window or out of it," he wrote, and: "I had rather have a picture in your show window than any place." But for some reason—perhaps the price, perhaps the subject, which offended the optimistic taste of the day—it failed to sell. The Worcester Museum had it under consideration for a long time; most of the trustees were in favor of it, but two women on the board objected to its "unpleasantness" and it was turned down, which made the artist very angry. Not until seven years after it was finished was it to find a purchaser.

Knoedler evidently had a request for an explanation of the subject, for we find Homer writing in 1902: "You ask me for a full description of my picture of the 'Gulf Stream.' I regret very much that I have painted a picture that requires any description. The subject of this picture is comprised in *its title* & I will refer these inquisitive schoolmam'ms to Lieut Maury. I have crossed the Gulf Stream *ten* times & I should know something about it. The boat & sharks are outside matters of very little consequence. *They have been blown out to sea by a hurricane.* You can tell these ladies that the unfortunate negro who now is so dazed & parboiled, will be rescued & returned to his friends and home, & ever after live happily."

III

Writing an old friend of Civil War days, Col. George G. Briggs, in August 1900, Homer said: "I do not put this letter of yours away to be answered tomorrow, that word is played out since the Spanish left these shores and with me 'improving the present hour' is getting of more and more value. . . . My work for the past two or three years has been mostly in water colors, Canadian sporting scenes and Rapids, Indians, etc. I have had two sales at Doll & Richards, and have paid expenses in that way, while I have at times painted an oil picture. Every condition must be favorable or I do not work and will not. For the last two months I have not painted—too many people about this place. They all leave here by the middle of September, then I shall work for the balance of the winter—here, until about middle of December, then in the West Indies somewhere, last year I was at Bermuda and year before at the Bahamas and I now have all the work made in the two winters. I may bring them out this next season, about 40 water colors."

To O'Brien, who had asked him to suggest a subject for a client, he replied in September 1900: "I do not care to put out any ideas for pictures. They are too valuable, and can be appropriated by any art student, defrauding me out of a possible picture. I will risk this one, and I assure you that I have some fine subjects to paint." Enclosed was a sketch bearing the alternative titles *On the Banks*, *Hard-a-Port* and *Fog*, probably similar to two extant drawings showing a fishing schooner menaced by a liner emerging from the fog. As far as we know the idea was never carried out.

But this same fall proved a busy one, bringing forth three of his finest seascapes and the beginning of a fourth. Although he had written Beatty in September, "I have nothing new at present. I have just commenced painting," a month later he had finished *On a Lee Shore* and *Eastern Point* and had begun *Early Morning after a Storm at Sea;* and in two months more *West Point* was completed. On October 19th he informed O'Brien: "I have a *very excellent painting*, 'On a Lee Shore' [sketch], 39 x 39. The price is (with the frame) $2,000. net. I will send it to you if you desire to see it. *Good things are scarce*. Frame not ordered yet, but I can send it by the time McKinley is elected." And to Knoedler: "The betting appears so strong in favor of

McKinley that I will order another frame." Forwarded to O'Brien, the picture was immediately sold to Dr. Frank W. Gunsaulus of Chicago for $2,850.

On a Lee Shore (pl. 54) had been started as early as 1897. A foggy day with heavy surf, the sun breaking through to shine on the sea far out. Bands of foam on the big waves are danger signals to a schooner that has emerged from the fog and is trying to work her way off the menacing shore under her lee. With less obvious violence than earlier marines, the enshrouding fog and the long rhythm of breakers give a penetrating sense of the peril and vast loneliness of the ocean. An austere harmony of cool grays and related tones—green and white surf, gray sea and sky, rust-brown rocks—it has the sensuous power governed by severe selectivity that marked his finest achievements in color. Its decorative values, linear rhythm and balance of masses make it one of his most satisfying compositions. It culminated the long process of purification that his art had gone through since his storytelling pictures of the 1880's. Here was no mere photographic naturalism but an expression of his special gift for pattern and space composition. It was the essence of his artistic contribution, freed of non-artistic elements. It revealed him as more aware than ever before of his own strengths and limitations.

On November 12th he announced to Knoedler: "I have got two *wonderful paintings!* new—30 x 48." *Eastern Point,* dated October 14th, shows a low rocky point against which wind-blown breakers are charging out of a stormy sea obscured by fog. Arthur Homer told Downes that his brother had his portable painting-house dragged out on Eastern Point during a northeaster, when he could not have stood up against the wind. Hence the picture's spontaneity, its vivid feel of the gale, its foreboding sense of more to come. And its freshness of color—cold green waves, greenish-white spray, rocks and sand a harmony of earthy browns, blacks, rust-red and white, like an Indian blanket. Evidently painted fast, it is one of his most brilliant pieces of pure brushwork—the Sargent technique, but far more solid. A swift capturing of the sea's mood at a particular moment, it has little of the pondered design of *On a Lee Shore.*

West Point, Prout's Neck (pl. 55) was finished December 23rd, according to his inscription on the back. Sunset, looking west over Saco Bay; flood tide, with smooth rollers overflowing the rocks, casting up a tongue of spray and

passing on towards shore—a motion vividly conveyed. The sky at the horizon is crimson; the water, reflecting not the sunset but the light upper sky, is pale greenish and flesh-color; against radiant sea and sky the upflung spray is dark and cold. Such subtleties as the relative darkness of the lower sky due to the earth's atmosphere, and the sea's bright reflection of the upper sky, reveal accurate firsthand observation, as anyone can recognize who has been on the water at this hour. But the picture is not dully photographic; it is alive with the rhythm of flooding waves and leaping spray—that energetic movement characteristic of Homer, now extending through the whole composition. It is a world away from the usual sentimental sunset piece; compared to Inness' or Wyant's versions of similar themes, this is a breath of fresh air—a magic moment on the sea pictured with masculine force.

Technically it is one of his freest performances, extremely varied in brushwork—bold and energetic in the rocks and broken water, fine and delicate in the spray. Though still direct painting, this is in no sense a one-sitting picture; close examination shows that it must have been worked on many times. Yet the effect is one of flowing force. He had succeeded in capturing in oil much of the spontaneity of his watercolors.

To a request through Knoedler for an explanation of the painting, he replied: "I suppose that this wish is prompted by the peculiarity of the light. The picture is painted *fifteen minutes* after sunset—not one minute before—as up to that minute the clouds over the sun would have their edges lighted with a brilliant glow of color—but now (in this picture) the sun has got beyond their immediate range & *they are in shadow.* [Sketch showing the globe of the earth, the sun sinking behind it, and dark clouds floating above.] The light is from the sky in this picture. You can see that it took many days of careful observation to get this, (with a high sea & tide just right)."

This was impressionism, not in minor matters of broken color or violet shadows but in fundamental aim—recording a particular effect of light and color in particular time and weather conditions. But there remained distinct differences. Monet said that he was painting not objects but the color of the air between himself and them, whereas Homer's interest remained the thing-in-itself. The impressionists bathed their pictures in a sea of atmosphere, but Homer's style remained clear-cut and precise. Monet turned out his hay-

stacks by the score; Homer was never as prolific or as thoughtless. An impressionist in the broadest sense of the word, he was far from an orthodox one.

Eastern Point and *West Point* were sent to Knoedler in early January 1901, the first priced at $2,000, the second at $2,400, net to him. Of *West Point* he said: "I send to you to-day a picture that is no ordinary affair. You will kindly notice that I am very particular about it." A few days later: "I received your telegram but too late. I live four miles from station & mail, & when a storm sets in I am shut out until I am dug out. . . . You are now to be crowded for a day or two with too many pictures by me. . . . There is only one picture of the lot that I am particular about—that is the sunset one, 'West Point, Prout's Neck, Me.' That one you are on no account to let out of your store until it is sold." It was quickly bought by Hugh H. Harrison for $3,000. "In making this sale," Homer wrote, "I reserve the right to an exhibition at the Society of Am Artists, & I *forbid* any *glass* or 'robbery-box' put onto the picture."

His high opinion of *West Point* was not shared by the critics, who having recovered from their enthusiasm for his first marines of the 1890's, had reverted to their normal moods of captiousness and boredom. The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, after saying that some painters called a picture by Dearth the worst in the Society exhibition, went on: "By a more general consent, however, that distinction has been earned by Winslow Homer—of all men. He has one good marine, with stormy waves dashing against rocks, but its companion . . . is hard in its lines, without air, disagreeable and cheap in color, and altogether mournful." Charles H. Caffin praised *Eastern Point* but found that *West Point* "smacked a little of the spectacular"; while the *Art Interchange* said: " 'Eastern Point' is much the better." The sting of these remarks was doubtless mitigated by the promptness with which the picture had been sold. *Eastern Point* took longer to find a purchaser, and after a year he offered it to Knoedler for $1,000, which they paid.

IV

Homer had never been the prize-winner that more fashionable contemporaries like Sargent, Chase and Alexander were. Up to his sixty-fifth year he

had received only two outstanding awards. But beginning in 1900 more honors came his way. That year he sent to the International Universal Exposition in Paris his 1890 oil, *A Summer Night,* which had been hanging obscurely in the Cumberland Club in Portland. *The Fox Hunt, The Lookout* and *Maine Coast* were also lent by their owners. The grand prizes went to the internationalists Sargent and Whistler, but he received a gold medal, along with Abbey, Alexander, Cecilia Beaux, Brush, Chase and Thayer. *A Summer Night* was purchased by the French government for the Luxembourg Museum, joining Whistler's *Mother* among the few American works there.

A shower of gold medals followed: one in 1901, two in 1902, one in 1904. These honors came too late in life for him to pile up the imposing list that some of his colleagues did. He took little stock in them. Shortly after receiving the Temple gold medal of the Pennsylvania Academy, he was in Doll & Richards and asking for a stamp, reached in his pocket for change and fished out a key, a buttonhook, some pennies and the Temple gold medal. In the studio his medals were left lying about among his painting things. The single exception was the Paris Exposition medal, in which he took great pride, always carrying it around with him in his outside breast pocket. There is a story that in his last illness it was found in the pocket of his night clothes. One evening at Prout's Neck when he had just received news of some honor and was being fulsomely congratulated by a group of ladies, much to his discomfort, he turned it off by pointing to Charles and saying, "You must remember that my brother here is quite as distinguished in his line of work as I am in mine."

When Beatty again asked him in 1901 to be a candidate for the Carnegie jury, he replied: "I refuse to have my name placed on the ballot with a chance of my being put on the Jury. I never will serve on another Jury, having been retired at the age of 65 years." Urged to reconsider, he finally consented. "I am delighted," wrote Beatty. "The expressions of the profession, following your acceptance and service in 1897, were frequent and flattering; and I was in a position to hear these." Again he received the highest number of votes. He notified Beatty that he would arrive "the day before the Committee meet. I wish to have time to look about in my own way & particularly to overlook & put in order (as it must need it by this time) the picture of the 'Wreck.'

I shall bring the proper varnish & a brush & sponge. That is all I need but clean water. I hope it has not been varnished by any outsider as varnish is what will damage any picture. I hope also that *no glass* has been put over it, as that to me, is a red flag to a bull.

"I do not regret to say & I will say, that I have been more interested in other matters than Art for the past year."

The jury this year included Eakins—the only time that we know of the two men meeting. It would be interesting to have a record of what they said—if anything, for both were men of few words. After Homer's death Eakins called him the greatest American artist of his time; Homer had probably never before heard of Eakins.

Thereafter he consistently refused to allow his name to be put up for the jury, although Beatty asked him every year. In 1904 he wrote: "I have passed the age limit and I positively refuse to serve on another Jury." Again: "As Oct happens to be the only month in the year in which I work I am obliged to decline."

V

Homer thought a lot about money. His letters were full of it—much more than of art. From what he said, art was a business. In this we can see his Yankee blood and mercantile ancestry. From boyhood he had made his own way, and his years as an illustrator had given him the habit of working for money. There was no humbug in him about art being its own reward; he believed that pictures were made to be sold. This businesslike attitude was reinforced by his aloofness from other artists. And Charles' financial success must have strengthened his own desire to succeed.

Not that he aimed at riches. All he wanted was security and independence. "He was unaffectedly indifferent to the possession of money in large sums," wrote J. Eastman Chase. "He once said to me that if he could be assured of a yearly income from his painting as large as the average salary of a department-store salesman he would be content. If he had *any* money in his purse he would never worry about where the next was coming from." This is borne out by a letter to Louis Prang in 1905: "I am comfortably fixed for life in regard to cash as I only desire enough for my support and a reasonable help

to others." He was never miserly, as witness his generosity to any Prout's Neck neighbor in need. Once when a nephew was ill and broke and too proud to appeal to his family, he received a substantial check from his uncle, with a brief note: "No thanks for this."

Actually, for all his talk, money considerations had little effect on his art. He never painted merely to sell, but primarily to please himself. If he had had an eye solely on the main chance, he would have turned out marines by the dozen. But he painted exactly the subjects he wanted to, even if he doubted that they would sell, like *The Lookout.* And he painted only as many as he felt like, even when his work was most in demand. When he had said all he wanted to in one line, he went on to something else, without regard to his public. His few repetitions were works done at the same time and place, such as his watercolor series. His artistic conscience was strong. Every picture was carefully pondered, often worked on over long periods. And his prices, even at the height of his success, never approached the levels of fashionable contemporaries like Sargent.

"So far as I could see," wrote Eastman Chase, "the successes that came to him had no influence upon either the quantity or the quality of his production. The fact that dealers and collectors were eager for his canvases was to him no reason why he should paint more. The only reason was when he saw subjects which he felt impelled to put upon canvas. . . . I think it could be truly said that no man was less moved than he by the prestige of high prices and the entrance to great collections."

From way back he had had a habit, in moments of discouragement, of declaring that he would paint no more. At the very outset of his career he had threatened to give up painting for a job with *Harper's,* only to be saved by Charles. The same pattern had been repeated through the years: his threats to abandon art for business, recorded by Stonehouse; his stopping oils when they failed to sell in the late 1880's, until *Undertow* was disposed of; his letter to O'Brien in 1893 when he was smarting under the failure to sell *The Fox Hunt,* and to Weir in 1898, when he said he had "decided to retire from business." In each case after the fit was past he had gone on to new achievements. As he grew older this idiosyncrasy increased, and more and more frequently he declared that he was about to give up painting. As he said to Beatty

in 1903: "Why should I worry and work, unless I feel like it? I have a competence, and no longer fear the poorhouse. I will paint only when I want to, and for my own pleasure." And to Col. Briggs: "Every condition must be favorable or I do not work and will not."

These threats, as well as his concern with money, were partly a game, a manifestation of his peculiar sense of humor. Unquestionably he got a lot of fun out of marketing his pictures, haggling over prices, pestering his dealers, threatening to tie up production. Most of what he said has to be taken with a large grain of salt. He may have meant it when he said it, but this did not prevent his saying the exact opposite a few days later. With more than the normal share of contrariness, his first reaction was always "no." But all of this had a more serious side. As he grew older he was painting fewer pictures, with increasing protests, while more of his energy was going into non-creative details. The years had intensified his sensitiveness to adverse criticism or seeming failure, and his fierce resistance to outside pressure. He was bound that no one would get more out of him than he felt like giving. And with age and solitude his preoccupation with money increased. Doubtless it was a compensation for much he had missed in his personal life.

Still in his studio unsold were a good many older paintings. Following the success of the Clarke sale, he brought these out, one or two at a time. In March 1900 he sent Knoedler *Lost on the Grand Banks* and *Hound and Hunter*, writing: "The two pictures after hanging in my studio about eight years, needed some overlooking, which I did with great care and interest, painting also on both of them. I am fully aware what these pictures are worth, and that they never will repay me for the expense of their production. Do not on any account let either of the paintings out of your hands, unless sold." The first was at once bought by John A. Spoor of Chicago for $2,850, of which the artist received $2,000. *Hound and Hunter* did not find a purchaser until about two years later.

In early December 1900 he gave Knoedler *Fog*, the 1894 figure piece, which he had repainted. "I hope you will pardon me," he wrote, "if I explain to you why I put this price of $2,000 inclusive of Frame on this picture. It has taken me a long time & much careful study—quite different from posing a successful lawyer in one's studio light & rattling him off in a weeks time to

the tune of $3,000. If you want more sentiment put into this picture I can with one or two touches, in five minutes time, give it the stomach ache that will suit any customer. Asking you to overlook these extra remarks . . . ."

Two days later: "I have concluded on receipt of your letter of Nov. 30th to unload one or two paintings for the frames that you now hold. I do not know the price of January pictures. You must keep me informed that I may be long or short on them as the market fluctuates. The picture now going forward is called 'Breaking on the Bar,' Cannon Rock. It was painted in *1895* & has been hanging in my studio untouched. I did not put it out or change it in any way as the breaking on the bar part of it looked so broken & so like decanters & crockery, & at the same time looked so fine at a proper distance. I now take the chance of sending it out." As to prices on the two: "You will charge $2,000 with the frame *each*. . . . The pictures & frames to *net me* from $1,200 to $1,500 each. I will gladly take your advice in regard to prices & I wish to be very liberal in the matter, & find out if possible if there is any market value to anything that I can do." *Cannon Rock* was bought by Dr. Gunsaulus of Chicago for a price that netted the painter $1,300. *Fog* took longer to find a home, and was returned to the artist, who once more repainted it. By September 1903 he was ready to write: "After about nine years of this picture, I will take $750 net, but it would be in the form of cash within a reasonable time." Finally in 1904 it was bought on these terms by Burton Mansfield of New Haven. In December 1900 he also sent Knoedler the *Northeaster* of 1895 which he said "you have already had in your show window five years ago. I have painted on it since & it is better." In a few months it was bought by George A. Hearn for $2,500, netting the painter $2,000.

Altogether, the years 1900 and 1901 were prosperous ones. He had sold four old paintings and two new ones, at prices which were fair if by no means high. (We may note that at the William T. Evans sale in 1900, *Storm-beaten* or *Weather-beaten*, for which Evans had paid $1,500 in 1896, went for $4,000—proving again what the Clarke sale had shown, that buyers were willing to give far more for works from famous collections than directly to the artist.) Still unsold, however, were *Hound and Hunter*, *The Gulf Stream* and a few others.

For a while there was a lull in his affairs. Then in September 1901 he wrote Knoedler: "I wish to know if you are still overloaded with my pictures. I am waiting until some of them get settled for good, before *I paint any more.* I have not painted *anything this summer* but I have a picture that you never have seen in the shape that it is now in, & it is very beautiful in my opinion, & it looks as if it was *all* that I should put out this season." The painting was *High Cliff* of 1894. A few weeks later: "In regard to sending anything to you at present (even if I had it which I have not) I think it would be a mistake as there are so many of my things on the market unsold. The only thing you may expect is the picture now at Pittsburgh, 'High Cliff.' " And a month later: "I think that if it will not sell there is little use in my putting out any more things. I have nothing but watercolors." For over a year the painting remained unsold, Homer continually pressing his dealers to dispose of it. Its failure to sell became an obsession with him, and he referred to it again and again in his letters. To O'Brien he complained in September 1902: "Why do you not sell that 'High Cliff' picture? I cannot do better than that. Why should I paint?" When it was finally bought in March 1903 by William T. Evans, for a price that netted Homer $1,500, all his dealers must have heaved sighs of relief.

VI

In his letter of December 7th, 1901, in which he told Knoedler that it would be a mistake to send them any more pictures "as there are so many of my things on the market unsold," he added: "At present I am in a most happy state of mind as I am hard at work on a *fine subject* that I can paint without any trouble in my studio. I have been free here for four days, the last tenderfoot having been frozen out, & now out of gun shot of any soul & surrounded by snow drifts, I again take up my brush after *nine months* of loafing."

The picture was *Searchlight, Harbor Entrance, Santiago de Cuba* (pl. 53) —a subject of timely interest, for at Santiago the chief action of the Spanish-American War had taken place, when Cervera's fleet, trying to break through the American blockade, had been destroyed in the summer of 1898. The scene is the parapet of the old Spanish fort of Morro Castle guarding the narrow entrance to the harbor, infamous in history because of the Cuban

political prisoners who had lain in its dungeons. Seen under a half-moon, the antiquated watchtower and cannon loom up sombre and grim, relics of an older civilization doomed to defeat. The brooding spirit of the scene contrasts with the lurid glare of the searchlights of Admiral Sampson's blockading squadron crisscrossing the sky. In its monumentality and its deep, simple color harmony of blues and grays, this is one of Homer's most impressive works.

Like *The Gulf Stream* the subject must have been in his mind since his Cuban visit of 1885, for there is a drawing of the spot made at that time. But it could not have taken him long to paint, for on December 19th he wrote Knoedler, apropos of an invitation to show a new painting: "The only thing that I have got is the one I commenced the other day, & as I may finish it in time I now beg to order a frame for it, to be done on Jan *5th at noon.* If I find, *in about a week from now* that I cannot finish the picture, I will write to you." On the 30th he reported that it was about to be shipped: "This is just the time to show that picture as the subject is now before the people."

The new work was on the whole well received by the critics, though several lamented its lack of "beauty." "It was an impossible subject," said the *Sun*, "and we will not say that Mr. Homer, with all his genius, has made it beautiful, for beauty is hardly the word to describe the rude force that is in this silent old fort above which the searchlight sweeps. But if it is not at all beautiful within the meaning of the word it is almost everything else." The *Tribune's* critic, however, felt that "there is something which repels. It is a good study in lighting, it is a good piece of technique, but we cannot say that it is beautiful." To this kind of criticism Homer replied in a letter to Knoedler: "That Santiago de Cuba picture *is not intended to be 'beautiful.'* There are certain things (unfortunately for critics) that are stern facts but are worth recording as a matter of history as in this case. This is a small part of Morro Castle & immediately over the Harbor entrance which is only about 400 feet wide—& from this point were seen all the stirring sights of June & July 1898. *I find it interesting.*"

As to price, he consented to make it $2,200 net to him, noting in his daybook that he did so "with regret, as I should have more money, but the doctors & lawyers must take the cake as the Artists are mostly D— F—." But when George A. Hearn offered Knoedler $2,000, he agreed.

VII

In the busy fall of 1900 he had started a seascape later called *Early Morning after a Storm at Sea* (pl. 57), noting on the stretcher: "First Painting Sept 26 1900. From Study of 1883 shown at Doll & Richards." This study, a watercolor from his first year at Prout's Neck, was nothing extraordinary in itself, but something about its subject interested him enough to take it up after all these years. He followed it in a general way in painting the oil, the form of the wave being almost exactly the same.

His title describes the scene accurately. Day is dawning over a storm-stirred sea. Warm pink and gold light breaks through lilac-gray clouds and reflects on the ocean. Against this radiance a huge breaking wave looms dark and cold, reflecting the upper sky which the dawn light has not yet reached; the contrast is strong between the sullen wave and the golden east. In color it is his most luminous work, not brilliant in an impressionist sense but clear and opalescent. As a record of a transitory effect of weather and time of day it is his subtlest achievement, and the one closest to the essential spirit of impressionism. The movement of breaking wave and swirling water, and the jutting rock-forms, are full of an energy that orthodox impressionism had lost. A sense of glory fills the picture—dawn and the end of a storm, and nature's eternal renewal of her freshness and force.

This was probably the painting of which Charles Homer told Downes that one summer his brother kept a large canvas all ready and his palette prepared, but day after day passed and he did nothing. "I did not understand why he was idle," said Charles. "I tried to persuade him to do something but he told me to mind my own business, in a good-natured tone." Soon it became apparent that he was waiting for a certain effect of light and weather. The whole summer went by without his getting what he was looking for. "But he got it next year," added Charles.

The picture had a long and checkered history. Three of his paintings had been bought by Chicagoans in 1900, and O'Brien, who had sold *On a Lee Shore*, asked for his next work. In December 1900 he wrote them: "The picture that you refer to I promise to send to you when finished. I will look upon it in future as your particular picture. I do not think I can finish it before

I have a crack at it out of doors in the spring. I do not like to rely on my study that I have used up to date."

A year later it was still uncompleted, for he wrote O'Brien that when *The Gulf Stream* came back from Venice, "the beautiful frame on it will go on the O'B Partic' picture directly I can get hold of it and finish the picture." (After the signature was a sketch of a lighted lamp and "6:30 A.M. Dec. 3.") But on March 15th, 1902, he reported: "The O'B is not finished. It will please you to know that after waiting a full year, looking out every day for it (when I have been here) on the 24th of Feby, my birthday, I got the light and the sea that I wanted but as it was very cold had to paint out of my window and I was a little too far away and although making a beautiful thing [sketch of a trumpet, marked "own trumpet"] it is not good enough yet and I must have another painting from nature on it."

Two weeks later: "I think it is quite possible that the O'B picture will be the last thing of importance that I shall paint. And at present 'High Cliff' that you have is the best of the two or three oil paintings that I now own. I have many watercolors—'Two Winters in the West Indies'—and as good work, with the exception of one or two etchings, as I ever did. And with the duckets that I now have safe I think I will retire at 66 years of age and praise God in good health."

Fall came and still the painting was not finished, and in late September he complained to O'Brien: "Why do you not sell that 'High Cliff' picture? I cannot do better than that. Why should I paint?" But a month later, October 29th, 1902, he wrote triumphantly that it was ready to ship, and "will be quite enough to show and the people who are in the clean up of October corn may be able to buy it but no others as the price will be too high. This is the only picture that I have been interested in for the past year and as I have kept you informed about it and promised it to you to manage I will now say that the long looked for day arrived and from 6 to 8 o'clock A.M. I painted from nature on this 'O'B,' finishing it, making the fourth painting on this canvas of two hours each. This is the best picture of the sea that I have painted. The price that you will charge is five thousand dollars—$5,000. The price net to me will be $4,000. This may be the last as well as the best picture. I have rents enough to keep me out of the poorhouse."

Two weeks later: "The O'B leaves here by the American Express at 3 P.M. . . . There was a sleet storm yesterday, but beautiful to-day, so I start O'B, and glad to get it out of my sight before I finish it too highly and spoil it. I hope the original member of your firm is still alive, after all these tedious years of waiting, and that he will be on hand to greet the O'B."

But while keeping his promise to O'Brien, he asked Knoedler to arrange to have it exhibited at the Union League Club in New York. "I did not care to take the picture out of his [O'Brien's] hands so soon," he wrote later, "as he had waited a year & a half for it, & I am willing to pay two commissions as the price that I have fixed is ample for all hands. All I care for is to have it shown to the public before it is stolen by Art Students." "The picture is to net me $3,000," he said. "I have put to M. O'Brien the price for him to charge at 5,000 & net to me 4,000. So there is a wide margin for both of you to trade in. The fact that good picture High Cliff is unsold has been most discouraging to me & I have only painted on this one new picture in the *last year* & only *four times* of two hours each on that—*(but always from nature)*." When Knoedler replied that they preferred to charge $4,000, he agreed, but added: "$4,000 will do very well for a start. But we go up in price *this time*, and not *down*." As a matter of fact, after all the correspondence O'Brien never did get the painting back.

Five days later he asked Knoedler to send it back to him: "I will return it to you *inside* of a *week*. I wish to paint on it *about two hours*. M. O'B was in a great hurry for this & I sent it off *too soon*."

Knoedler having transmitted an offer from a client in late January, he replied: "You say a New York Collector is interested in the picture 'Early Morning.' If there is only one man interested in that work, I think I will wait until the U. S. of America can produce *two men* each of which will know a good thing when he sees it. I refuse to make any change in the arrangements already made with you."

But the hopes he had placed in it were not realized. When it was shown at the Society of American Artists in the spring of 1903, together with *Cannon Rock* of 1895, it was the older work that got most of the praise, and the new one was passed over with perfunctory comment, or damned. The *Times*, after praising *Cannon Rock* to the skies and calling Homer "in some ways

the greatest living marine painter," went on: "Yet even his namesake is said to have nodded. In the Central Gallery—the most unfortunate place to hang it, by the way—is another marine by Homer, called 'Early Morning,' which grievously lacks the virtues of 'Cannon Rock.' The foam is not foam but vegetation of some strange, uncanny shape and color. Here was a picture to humor by hanging it high in the Vanderbilt Gallery. . . . It would have been kinder to reject it than to place it where it looks so ill." The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* was less polite: "Winslow Homer is disappointing. . . . He has painted some of the most splendid marines in our galleries, but strength has with him gone to its length and is now mere rudeness. His 'Early Morning' represents a heaving sea of chalk and pink, with waves topped by bunches of wool, and the distant stretches of his ocean are illuminated milk. His 'Cannon Rock' is better."

In spite of Homer's supposed indifference to criticism, this reception of "the best picture of the sea that I have painted" stung him to the quick. In reply to an invitation from Beatty in June to send to the Carnegie exhibition and to be a candidate for the jury, he wrote: "Having retired from business for good, I regret to be obliged to say to you that I decline to serve on any Jury—now, or *ever after*. As the last picture I painted only met with abuse & no one understood it, I will not offer it to you for your next show."

In early September Beatty, between whom and Homer a warm friendship had grown up, visited Prout's Neck. His record of this visit, included elsewhere in this book, reveals Homer's discouragement and his obstinate determination not to paint any more. They discussed *Early Morning*, and among Beatty's original notes appear these remarks by Homer: " 'You go in to Knoedler's and look at that picture. Why, I could in an hour bring that picture within the comprehension of the people. By making it a little lighter. Simple white would do it. By rubbing in white and then rubbing it off. Why, I hang my pictures on the upper balcony of the studio, and go down by the sea seventy-five feet away, and look at them. I can see the least thing that is out. I can then correct it. They hung it in a little room at the Academy. Why, of course it would look brutal there. Besides that, the people never see that early morning effect. They don't get up early enough. They only see that duck pond down there'—with a gesture of contempt toward the quiet sea."

These talks with Beatty had a salutary effect, for the day his visitor left, Homer asked Knoedler to return the painting: "I wish to overlook this picture once more before sending it to Pittsburg. It will not take me more than *one day*." Sending it back a few days later, he reported: "I have lightened the scale of color to bring it within the range of the public. Its the same thing. Easy to be understood. The price for this picture is $5,000. You will not charge any more or any less for it & will charge me your usual commission." To Beatty he wrote: "I send your Institution for exhibition the painting 'Early Morning after Storm' that I mentioned to you & on which I have been *at work* for two days. I have lightened the scale of color. I know that it will now be understood & if it can be hung in the long gallery on the second line at the distance across the gallery it will be admired. P.S. We received your letter & I will say that I enjoyed your visit here very much & I have to give you my sincere thanks for the lectures on Art that you unloaded & practised on me. The result has been wonderful—here is a picture that was laughed at at the Society of Am Artists, & now in two days work changed into this work that I am now sending to your exhibition—& I am proud of it." The good effect of these talks makes one wish that he had had more of such artistic companionship.

Whether because of the repainting, or the innate variability of critics, the picture was more cordially received when it was shown again. Its subsequent history, however, was an anticlimax. Still unsold in the summer of 1904, it was sent to the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, where it was bought by William K. Bixby of St. Louis for $2,700, of which the artist received $2,300. Fourteen years later, after his death, it was to change hands for $30,000; and in six years more, for over $50,000.

That Homer's discouragement had been real enough was shown by the fact that he painted no oils in 1903, nor any watercolors until late in the year.

VIII

Homer's conversations with Beatty, as recorded by the latter elsewhere in this book, are the naïve, blunt expressions of a man unused to artistic discussion. His letters, as we have seen, contain hardly a word about art, except his

own paintings. When he talked about his pictures it was usually about their subjects. Bringing some Bermuda watercolors to Doll & Richards, including one of a drove of hogs, he told all about the animals' breed and peculiarities but never mentioned the quality of the watercolors. He was an extreme example of the not uncommon type of artist who has a positive phobia against discussion of art. But this does not mean that he did not do a great deal of thinking about the aesthetic element in his own work; his pictures give ample evidence of this. He thought about it in his own way, with little reference to other artists' ideas.

Beatty's record shows that the simple naturalistic philosophy that had governed him from the beginning was still fundamentally unchanged. Asked if, in painting nature, he ever took the liberty of modifying colors, he replied emphatically: "Never! When I have selected the thing carefully, I paint it exactly as it appears." Of course he did not actually do this, for it is impossible for the human hand to paint anything "exactly as it appears" without the human mind making some unconscious modification. But the fact that he believed in painting this way, and thought that he did so, is revealing.

But the conversations also show a more conscious selectivity than he had ever expressed before. When Beatty asked him if he did not agree that beauty exists in nature and has only to be reproduced, he answered: "Yes, but the rare thing is to find a painter who knows a good thing when he sees it!" And again: "You must not paint everything you see. You must wait, and wait patiently, until the exceptional, the wonderful effect or aspect comes." This selectivity has been amply demonstrated—the long time he took choosing a subject, sometimes keeping it in mind for years; and the time often spent carrying it out—not in actual work, for he was a fast executant, but in waiting for the right conditions. As Downes said: "He was accustomed to do a great deal of looking before he decided upon a subject to paint; and sometimes he would spend whole days just looking at the sea, without touching a brush."

There was a corresponding selectivity in his style. Where other naturalistic painters cluttered their pictures with a thousand and one petty details, he saw things in their largest, simplest terms, eliminating everything unessential. This simplification, instinctive in early years, became increasingly conscious as he matured. When one compares his Prout's Neck pictures with the actual

scenes, one realizes the difference between the undiscriminating photographic naturalist and the highly selective one.

He thought much about color, as Beatty's record shows—not only its representational function but its aesthetic value. His copy of Chevreul's *Laws of the Contrast of Colour and their Application to the Arts*, given to him by Charles in 1873 or earlier, was well worn and annotated in his hand. To Beatty he said, "It is my Bible." A young neighbor working in his flower garden was once accosted by the painter with the query, "Who taught you about color?", and on his next visit to the studio Chevreul was produced to show that he had arranged his flowers exactly right.

Of his methods of work little is known; he had no pupils, he never allowed anyone except children to watch him paint, and he said or wrote almost nothing on the subject. Much of his painting was evidently done from nature; *Early Morning*, for example. His portable painting-house was proof that he would go to unusual lengths to work from nature. But this was not his invariable custom; many pictures were worked on afterwards in his studio. Some such as *The Gulf Stream* and *Searchlight* must have been done entirely from sketches or memory. In early years he had drawn continually and used his sketches in his oils, but in later life he did few drawings. Instead, watercolors served as raw material for some paintings. But by this time his memory was so trained that he no longer depended on sketches. He must have had an extraordinary visual memory. His Civil War friend Col. Briggs, meeting him thirty years after the war, was reminiscing about a sharpshooter who had rigged up a comfortable seat in a tree, and described the contraption, but Homer said, "No, it was like this," and proceeded to make a drawing of it in full detail. In actual execution he was extremely fast and decided. There was no fumbling or feeling his way; everything must have been clear in his mind beforehand. "It never seemed strange," said one who as a girl had watched him paint *The Fog Warning*, "that he went straight ahead without corrections, for that's as a great artist would paint."

IX

The winter of 1903 to 1904 was spent in Florida. About to sail for Key

West, he wrote Arthur on December 5th: "I have an idea at present of doing some work but do not know how long that will last—at anyrate I will once more have a good feed of goat flesh & smoke some good cigars & catch some red snappers." The solution of his difficulties with *Early Morning* had put him in the humor to paint again, and in Key West harbor he did a group of watercolors of fishing boats with negro crews—white hulls dazzling in sunlight, dark bodies, gay-colored clothes, pellucid blue water—that were among his most luminous works. Of all his watercolors they were the broadest and most impressionistic. He no longer cared about anything but essentials—the main masses, the large effect of light and color. The harmonies were bold, balancing large areas of light cool tones—whites, grays, pale blues—with strong accents of earthy red, brown, black. Washes were of the utmost transparency, leaving much of the paper bare, as in the white boats and sails, with only a delicate tone here and there to model them. But there was plenty of substance, due to firm construction and skillful use of color to create projection and recession—something he was becoming increasingly aware of.

After the first of the year he moved on to Homosassa on the Gulf of Mexico at the mouth of the Homosassa River, noted for bass-fishing. Here more watercolors were painted, probably in the intervals of landing fish, judging by their subjects—quiet water reflecting a tropical luxuriance of palms, here and there a fisherman casting, sometimes a life-size close-up of a hooked bass leaping out of the water. Though without the brilliancy of his Nassau work, their varied greens in soft sunlight and drowsy air had a quiet sumptuousness.

Back in Maine by late March 1904, he set to work on his first painting in a year and a half, a small canvas called *A Summer Squall.* A sudden storm whips the sea into a maelstrom of dark water flecked with livid whitecaps—not the long ponderous rhythm of a full-fledged gale, but the sudden violence of a squall. Far out a tiny dory, her sheets blown away, scuds helplessly before the wind. Sending it to Knoedler, he priced it at $700 net to him, adding: "I should prefer that you should not charge more than $1,000"—for which it was sold in October.

Art was then shelved for a while. Returning from the Adirondacks in early July, he wrote Beatty: "I found my garden so full of weeds that I have been

at work every hour I could get. . . . I shall have a very nice garden this year and the Flounders will bite as usual. . . . If you are anywhere in this neighborhood I shall hope to see you." "Your reference to flounders is like the voice of a siren," Beatty replied. "I am not sure that the prospect of a little visit with you will not draw me to Scarboro. . . . But mind you, I will expect to find you hard at work painting." "I am not working & no chance of my doing so," was the answer. But in early October he reported to another friend: "All the people have left here & I am painting & very busy"; and again: "I am painting two oil-pictures, one of which is quite an affair."

The one that was "quite an affair" must have been *Kissing the Moon* (pl. 56), finished November 15th—a characteristically original subject, proving that he had lost none of his ability to create art out of unexpected aspects of nature. The three men in the boat are in the ruddy light of a low sun, while in the east a full moon is rising, its lower edge touched by a wave's crest—hence the picture's title. The autumn sea is dark and cold in the clear afternoon light, and the contrast between it and the warm-colored figures, their tanned faces vermilion in the sunlight, is the chief color motif. The color has a full-blooded strength such as he had not often attained. The handling is extremely bold and energetic, with a deeply sensuous feeling for the pigment itself and its manipulation. His eye had never been fresher or his hand firmer.

The other painting was a view of Cape Trinity at the mouth of the Saguenay River, showing its great sheer cliffs outlined dramatically against a broken moonlit sky—a romantic subject rather alien to Homer's nature; one thinks of the vastness and intense emotion that Ryder embodied in canvases a fraction of the size. Sending it to Knoedler he wrote naïvely that "it is a most truthful rendering of this most beautiful & impressive cape, & from a point of view impossible to take by photograph. This should be in your window about Christmas time."

While working on these two paintings he carried on a spirited correspondence with Knoedler that shows the rankling effects of his experience with *Early Morning*. He asked them to return all his watercolors, saying: "My things are too common & cheap, & what I am now painting is of quite another order." On Knoedler urging him to leave the watercolors with them, he replied: "I am quite willing to do so & I am very grateful to you for the good

showing that has been given them to date, & you may do what you see fit with them. But you will pardon me if I have something to say in regard to the exhibition of any oil paintings that I may send to you. I shall send nothing to you but what will be under your own observation & care until it is returned to me or I direct you where to send it. Not even is it to be *sent out on approval.* I will not take your valuable time with any particulars, will simply say that I wish you to run your own store, and not let Art Directors & collectors for Public Exhibitions do it. I shall send you within three weeks two paintings & I will ask you to show them one at a time in your show window. That will prevent their being shown at any of the New York Exhibitions, keep them away from critics, & insure their being well hung. Your window is the only place where a picture can be seen in a proper manner, that is, at a point of view from which an artist paints his picture— to look at & not to smell of.

"I will not trouble you with any more letters. Let this dose last you all winter."

That this aversion to the large New York exhibitions was not just talk is shown by the fact that he never exhibited at the Society of American Artists after the unfavorable reception of *Early Morning*, and that while remaining a member of the National Academy and the Water Color Society, he had showed there only once or twice since the late 1880's. In these years he sent regularly only to the big shows outside New York, such as the Carnegie Institute and the Pennsylvania Academy.

The winter of 1904 to 1905 he again spent at Homosassa, fishing. "You have the beautiful snow with you," he wrote Mattie just before Christmas, "& I should have roses if anything was looked after here but wild cats." A week later he reported to Knoedler: "I have not worked any yet, but expect to soon, & whatever I do will be quite different from last year." But before leaving at the end of January he said: "I am very well but have not worked any it being too cold here." It was probably on the return trip that he painted his only watercolor dated 1905, of Diamond Shoal lightship off Cape Hatteras (pl. 61). In dramatic force of threatening sky and livid sea, in depth of color, in power of draftsmanship, this was one of his greatest watercolors. As far as we know it was his last; none have been found dated later. One wonders how, after reaching this mastery, he could stop.

His letters to Knoedler were growing more and more querulous, harping continually on money and pictures unsold. "It would not be a bad idea for you to notify me if any of the water colors sell," he wrote in April 1905, "as I could replace them with a *higher class goods* if I had any encouragement to do so." And in May, acknowledging a check for two watercolors sold: "I receive with pleasure this unexpected sum of money. It's not a bad idea this looking at a little money now & then—who knows but I may paint something some day."

X

Almost every summer he had still visited the Adirondacks. "The fishing is over here & I am sketching in water colors," he had written Mattie in June 1900. "Tell Charlie I have a fine sketch of a black bass taken in the boat five minutes after he was caught. I present it to him for his fish room at W. T." But only two or three watercolors resulted from this trip, and none from later ones. Though he went to the Adirondacks every year from 1901 through 1905, and in 1908, it was now for fishing only. He also visited Canada in August 1902, writing Knoedler beforehand: "*Work!* now is in order with me"; and returned a month later with a small group of watercolors painted at Lake St. John and on the Saguenay. This was his last known trip to Canada, and in 1905 he and Charlie presented Van Felson with their camp on Lake Tourilli.

Out of these 1902 Canadian watercolors grew one of his last oils. In July 1904, sending Doll & Richards two watercolors of the Saguenay River, including one now owned by the Brooklyn Museum (pl. 59), he wrote: "I value them highly, as I could make a fine picture by combining the two in an oil painting," and made a sketch of two canoes shooting rapids. In late August, after the sale of *Fog*, he wrote them again: "Having sold a picture after waiting a year & a half, I now propose painting another, & as that subject of the Rapids upper Saguenay River is the most easy thing as I have many studies of the subject & even a trip up there at this time of year is not a bad thing—I will ask you to send me the three drawings, lately submitted to you." Nothing more is recorded of the project until a year later, when he asked Knoedler to return still another watercolor of the Saguenay: "I wish to refer to it in a

picture that I have now on hand & propose to paint." "I have been waiting for the summer people to leave here," he wrote Louis Prang in October, "thinking I would do more work, although I am the only one interested in the matter. . . . Just now I have commenced a picture the first since last October. I find one a year is enough to fill the market." In the oil (pl. 59) he used the general scheme of the Brooklyn Museum watercolor.

The painting was never finished. It stood on his easel for several years but did not get beyond the stage of laying in the main masses, except the canoe and figures. Chalk marks show projected changes. After his death Charles gave it to the Metropolitan Museum. Even in its unfinished state it is impressive. To the qualities of his earlier north woods oils it adds greater movement in the rushing water bearing the canoe forward and the muscular tension of the men. Its undiminished energy makes one wonder why it was not completed. Downes says that he did not wish to do so without visiting the Saguenay once more. But beneath this must have been the deeper causes that made him give up all creative work at this time.

He stayed at Prout's Neck well into December 1905, writing Arthur on the 6th: "All work has been stopped since Tuesday night. Big snow storm. High drifts. Cannot see church steps. Very cold outside & very well." That winter he visited Atlantic City, whence he wrote Arthur just before Christmas: "I consider it the best place for an old man that I have seen. You should see them being wheeled about in the Bath Chairs [sketch] with their pink cheeks & white hair, & gathered up in sheltered corners reading the papers. It would be very slow for a man who cares to be doing anything *but loaf* & be waited on. You have until you are 70 years old before you would think of this kind of thing." And to Mattie: "This is a wonderful place for health. The six mile board walk with dry & clean walking & free from dust & at this time of year very few people to knock up against. I walk about five miles every day & manage to kill time although slow at times. I may stay here two weeks longer, then go south." On February 18th, just before his seventieth birthday, he was in Norfolk, Virginia, whence he wrote Charles that he was about to start north and might come to New York on his birthday "for a quiet dinner with you, but a family affair. I do not consider this 70th much of a subject for congratulation."

That summer he had a prolonged illness, for the first time in his life. "I have not been well all summer," he wrote Beatty in early October, "but now I think I am all right with no work for the past year." "I have entirely recovered my health," he wrote Charles two weeks later. "I am now an ordinary old man. No doubt about either of the above facts. . . . I have been well for four days and that settles it. I am now interested in attending to my business."

By this time most of his important oils had been sold, but still on Knoedler's hands were *The Gulf Stream* and *Kissing the Moon* and one or two others. No sales had been made in 1905 or 1906, as far as we know, and his letters to Knoedler were becoming more and more irritable. "I realize that this small business of mine is of little value to you," he wrote in November 1906, "& from no fault of yours & no fault of mine. You are willing to sell & I am ready to paint but *I no longer paint for nothing*." About this time, when J. Eastman Chase asked him what work he was doing, "he replied, 'What's the use of my painting any more? The public don't want my pictures.' I ventured to say that I thought quite the contrary. 'Well,' was his characteristic reply, 'there are two of my pictures on sale at Blank's now; one is a good one; the other isn't worth a damn.' The 'good one' was the *Gulf Stream*."

He had done no painting since the fall of 1905 and he was to produce no new pictures until the fall of 1908—three years in which the little work he did was repainting older canvases. He himself blamed this on lack of encouragement, and it is true that certain paintings on which he set great store, notably *The Gulf Stream* and *Early Morning*, had been coolly received; but more than half of his recent pictures had been promptly sold. One contrasts this with Thomas Eakins, painting his finest work through years of complete public indifference. Deeper than such considerations must have been other causes that Homer himself was reluctant to admit. Old age and bad health were having their effect. Not a direct physical effect, for his few works before and after this period showed no falling off in vigor and skill; on the contrary, his mastery increased right up to the end. One thinks of Renoir keeping on painting when the brushes had to be tied to his paralyzed fingers, and one divines in Homer's case a failing in creative power. To an old friend he said at this time that he was not going to paint any more, as he had said every-

thing he wanted to. Temporarily at least, the springs within had run dry.

XI

In these years when he had given up work, new honors came to him. In early 1906, George A. Hearn, who had become the chief collector of his pictures since Clarke, gave the Metropolitan Museum two of his finest Homers, *Cannon Rock* and *Searchlight*. In April 1910 he presented *Northeaster* and after the artist's death he was to add *The Maine Coast* and *Moonlight, Wood's Island Light,* to form by far the most important group of Homer's oils in any museum—a group since augmented by many fine early pictures.

The Gulf Stream, still unsold, was exhibited in December 1906 at the National Academy—his first showing there since 1888. Homer put a price on it that he said he was sure no one would pay, $5,000. "When the canvas came before the Jury," reported the *Art News,* "there was a murmur of admiration, and then one artist called out, 'Boys, that ought to be in the Metropolitan.' A letter addressed to the Director of the Museum was at once drawn up and signed by all the members of the Jury, suggesting that the Museum purchase the canvas. This was immediately dispatched to Sir Purdon Clarke, and the following day Mr. Roger E. Fry appeared at the Galleries and inspected the picture. Two days afterward the Museum sent word that it would take the picture." The price paid was $4,500—the highest figure known to be received by him so far.

Next month *Kissing the Moon* was bought by Dr. Lewis A. Stimson for $3,500, and a month later the Corcoran Gallery acquired *A Light on the Sea* for $2,500. About the same time William T. Evans gave his American collection to the National Gallery of Art in Washington, including *High Cliff* and the early *Visit of the Old Mistress.*

These successes stimulated him, not to painting new pictures, but to putting out old ones. In early 1907 he sent Knoedler *Cloud Shadows* and *Below Zero,* the latter being quickly sold for $1,500; and *Spring,* a Houghton Farm shepherdess painted in 1879, now cut down to a smaller size. All this activity explains why he was still in Prout's Neck in late January, writing Arthur:

"I am too busy at present to leave here & when I do leave I shall not go south of Norfolk—that is the best Hotel & more sea trips, daily, to go & return same day. . . . I have no time to write, the days are short & there is now a tide in my affairs that I am taking at the flood. Evenings I have other use for. The past eight days have been a great trial. Everything frozen up in the house outside my sleeping room every night. I have an army of pails & the well is done up every day like a rag on a toe. I have Lawrence daily. I keep my food that would freeze in my library. I find this life much pleasanter than having nothing to do but kill time."

But still no new work was forthcoming, and in July he wrote Leila Mechlin, who was doing an article on him for the *International Studio*: "My dear Mister or Madam Leila Mechlin, I thank you sincerely for your interest in proposing an article on my work. Perhaps you think that I am still painting and interested in art. *That is a mistake.* I care nothing for art. I no longer paint. I do not wish to see my name in print again." Even taking into account how he had always loathed publicity and had rebuffed would-be writers, this sad, bitter letter reveals depths of melancholy from which no creative work could emerge.

That summer when Beatty wrote that he hoped to visit him, adding, "Get out your canvas and brushes!" he replied, "There will be no painting as I am very well & the smell of paint would not agree with me at my age." But two months later, in early November: "You will be glad to hear that I am painting again. *I work hard every afternoon* from 4.30 to 4.40—that being the limit of the light that I represent, the title of my picture being '*Early Evening*.' I am alone here & very well." What he was doing was repainting his Tynemouth oil of 1881 showing two fishergirls and an old tar on a cliff. He did little to the figures but repainted the whole sky, changing it from dull gray to a bright sunset. The result is not especially happy, for the dark figures stand out against the sky in somewhat posterlike fashion. *The Gale*, another repainted English oil, suffers from the same obvious silhouetted quality. Even in maturity his taste was fallible.

"Frost on windows for the first time this morning," he reported to Charles at the end of November. "Mop frozen stiff in other room [sketch]. I have just finished that picture by 'letting well enough alone.' Which is the rule

for grown artists *only*. This painting will not be new to you as it is the two girls & old pilot that have been hanging in my studio so long. Only I have made a new thing representing early evening. It is now *a very fine picture*. You say 'You are rather well.' That would not do for me. I am A No. 1 in health. I regret that I must leave here soon, it is so cold." A week later: "I am enjoying every minute of my life here. Busy outdoors & in." Ten days later: "The snow is now deep & I am packing to leave soon. . . . Every other man & all the women sick up & down the road with grippe. I am very well. Just packed up & will send to-morrow my picture to Knoedler." His price was $5,000, and within a month Charles L. Freer had bought it for this figure.

In the Carnegie Institute exhibition in the spring of 1908 Beatty honored him with a special group of twenty-two paintings, lent by museums or private collectors. Almost all were canvases done since he settled in Maine, and though a few capital works were missing, it was the most complete survey of his oils so far held. Half came from museums. No other living American, probably, could have been represented by so many major works in public collections. For Beatty the assembling of the show had been a labor of love, and he wrote cordially inviting the artist to attend the opening and to stay with him. Homer's reply characteristically did not mention the exhibition, but gave as his reason for not visiting Pittsburgh the fact that his studio was being reroofed and his cottage painted.

XII

In old age, as seen in his rare photographs (for he was intensely camera-shy) Homer came to resemble an old sea captain, with a rugged, deeply furrowed face. In his rare appearances in society he still dressed with the same meticulous care. But as the years passed and Prout's Neck grew more crowded he was less and less visible. Used to his long solitary winters, he found himself in the midst of a summer colony consisting largely of women. He was now a celebrity, who could easily have had all his time taken up by lion-hunters. Instead, he withdrew even more completely. Every summer he went away for several weeks to the Adirondacks or Canada. When at Prout's he kept to himself and was seldom seen by the vacationists. "They're coming earlier

every year," he once remarked sadly, and he greeted with relief the departure of the last of them in the fall; only then did he begin to work. Few were admitted to his studio, and he acquired a growing reputation as a hermit and a woman-hater.

Outside of his family he had almost no intimates. To such few old friends as he might occasionally see he remained as he had always been. But to strangers he presented quite a different face. Journalists, feminine admirers, autograph-hunters, art students, fellow artists—anyone threatening to invade his privacy—met with a frosty reception. If he were in a pleasant humor he protested good-naturedly and begged to be excused from receiving them. In a bad mood he could display an appalling rudeness. Many are the stories of this kind, some doubtless exaggerated. By this time he was a "character" not only in the community but in the larger art world, and we can be sure that the tales lost nothing in the telling. But they are too numerous and consistent not to have a core of truth. In any case they deserve recording as part of the Homer legend.

Once, it was said, he tried to insure privacy by putting up a sign, "Mr. Homer is not at home." Some ladies seeing him in his garden, approached and began, "Mr. Homer, we —." He drew himself up and said, "Ladies, Mr. Homer is not at home." "But," they protested, "Mr. H—." More emphatically he repeated, "Mr. Homer is not at home," and they were forced to beat a retreat. "He paid no attention to the person who knocked at his door," wrote a friend, "unless he or she rapped three times, as this number of knocks was well known to all his friends. He paid a dollar each morning to have one of the local men call to see if he were alive." Harrison Morris told a story that was current— "how the postman was ordered to knock and leave the mail on the step if he got a shouted answer from the inside; but if no answer came, he was instructed to smash in the door and report to Homer's brother what had happened."

Women were the principal objects of his rebuffs, probably because they were numerous and persistent. A young woman artist visiting Prout's wrote asking to see his work, and received a polite reply that there was really nothing to see. But she got a local girl to take her along incognito when a message had to be delivered to him. They talked about village affairs until finally the

young artist, feeling her opportunity slipping away, asked to see his pictures. In reply he produced a photograph of a recent one. "I saw this last winter in town," she said. "Can't we see something you are working on now?" Suspiciously he asked her name, and then inquired, "Didn't you write me last summer?" Seeing that the game was up, she confessed. Homer burst out laughing: "You did get the best of me, didn't you?" She meekly agreed, and again asked to see his studio. But she never did; he chatted a while longer and then bowed them out pleasantly but firmly.

His good friend Charles Morgan had an eminent visitor, a judge, who wanted to meet him. Morgan was reluctant to arrange this, knowing the artist as he did, but finally agreed. Homer got out a bottle of rum and asked his guests to sit down, but there was only one chair, and it soon became apparent that this was not unintentional, and the judge took the hint and left.

Even prospective purchasers were coolly received. In spite of his dealers' warnings some misguided individuals persisted in visiting Maine and trying to see him, only to be roundly snubbed for their pains. When William J. Bixbee said to him, "I should think you would like to have a studio during the winter months in Boston or New York," he replied: "I had rather put my pictures in the hands of dealers when I get through with them. I don't want a lot of people nosing around my studio and bothering me. I don't want to see them at all. Let the dealers have all that bother." One collector having travelled all the way from New York found the studio closed and wandered along the cliffs until he met a man in old clothes, rubber boots and a battered hat, carrying a fishing pole. "I say, my man," he said, "if you can tell me where I can find Winslow Homer I have a quarter here for you." The instant reply was, "Where's your quarter?" and when it was handed over the fisherman said, "I am Winslow Homer." This time the story ended happily; the artist took the stranger back to his studio, entertained him, and sold him a picture. But another visitor who had agreed to buy a painting innocently inquired whether it was supposed to be sunset or moonrise, and was abruptly informed, "The picture is not for sale."

Once a number of artists including at least one National Academician and several Associates were painting near Prout's Neck, and all being admirers of his work decided to make a pilgrimage to see him. Aware of his peculiarities,

they stopped at the Checkley House and sent him a letter asking if they might call, signed with all their names. The messenger returned with a note that Mr. Homer presented his compliments and begged to be excused from receiving "art students." Another time, informed that two well-known academic landscape painters were sketching in the neighborhood, he growled, "What are those amateurs doing around here?" Downes comments: "When I repeated this remark to his brother, he said, 'That was not like him.' "

But these stories can be balanced by others that show him in quite a different light. An unknown young painter who admired his work boldly knocked at the door and asked him to look at his sketches. Homer must have been in a good mood, for he invited the young man in, apologized for his modest hospitality and treated him as an equal in art. Petrified with astonishment, the boy sat and listened to his idol, forgot to ask for a criticism, saw nothing, and was finally ushered out with the greatest courtesy—but never got in again.

Leon Kroll, who spent the summer of 1907 at Prout's Neck with two young painter friends, recalls that Homer let them use a shack he had down the bay, as a studio. Kroll used to get up at five o'clock to paint the shore. Returning one morning to his boardinghouse he found the old artist talking with his friends. On being introduced Homer said, "You're the young man I see painting on the rocks so early in the morning—you know I see everything from my window." Kroll showed his sketches and Homer complimented him on them, talking mostly about the spots where they were painted. The young artist brought out a photograph of a portrait of his mother. "Homer seemed to like it. He looked at it longer than at the sketches, and then said, 'Paint figures, my boy, leave rocks for your old age—they're easy.' He also said that he considered figure painting the greater art. He then invited us to come to his studio. He told us that if the axe was leaning against the jamb of the door, he was in; if it was against the door, he was out. He received us in a red undershirt and invited us to have a drink. That was when Maine was prohibition, long before the country was. The booze room was well stocked. He talked a bit and said he was not painting much any more—just a watercolor now and then. He said he would leave painting to us younger men. Every one was putting glass over pictures at that time. 'I hate to go to museums or exhibitions now,' he said, 'because all I can see is my own bald head.' "

By this time he had lost touch with his artist friends of old New York days, and knew few of the younger men, or they him. Beatty was almost his only new friend in the profession. When in New York he would sometimes drop in at the Century Club, and with hardly a word to fellow members, would settle in the reading room for a nap. Once when he was dining with Beatty the latter suggested that they go on to the Academy Varnishing Day reception. Homer demurred, saying that he didn't like to go where he wasn't expected, but finally consented. Although everyone there knew his work, few knew him. "I think I actually introduced him to a score of the younger painters within the first fifteen minutes," wrote Beatty. "He was given an ovation. For half an hour it seemed like a Homer reception." In old age Homer said to Mrs. Joseph De Camp, daughter of his old comrade at Bufford's, Joseph E. Baker, that one of the mistakes of his life was that he had not mixed with "the boys," meaning his fellow artists.

In New York he would sometimes call on Albert Milch, who did his framing, and sit in his office for hours, talking little, watching the crowds. On one of his last trips they spent several hours in the Metropolitan Museum, Homer looking at everything, especially the old masters, but refusing to look at his own pictures, which he said he knew well enough. He hated the city, said Milch, and never stayed longer than he had to.

His affection for a few old friends is shown in a letter of October 1905 to Louis Prang, the Boston lithographer who had published his *Campaign Sketches* back in Civil War days: "My dear old friend: I am so very glad to hear from you & to see that you are very well. No one can write a letter like yours at our age (we know it) unless he is in good health. I thank Heaven I am very well also, and I retire from business every now & then, & then take it up again. . . . I have passed the last two winters in Florida, the year before in Bermuda, & before that in Nassau. I think Bahamas the best place I have ever found. I do not know yet where I will go this winter. . . . You will be glad to know that I am comfortably fixed for life in regard to cash as I only desire enough for my support and a reasonable help to others, & I am having a happy life, *free from care,* & my good old friend I wish you a pleasant winter *& hope yet to see you* again."

Prang immediately replied that he was coming up to visit him, and Homer's

next letter had more of his normal acerbity: "Dear Friend Prang: You do not appear to understand my position here at this time of year. Fortunately I sent up to the station for some express & mail & received your letter of the 20th inst. So I hope now to save you a most disagreeable journey. In the first place I will answer your questions. There are no hotels or houses open to receive visitors within ten miles of my house (Portland). They are all closed & shutters up as the season is over & nothing doing until next summer when teams are at the R. R. Station (*four miles* from my house) but now you would have to hunt for some farmer to take you over. I do not keep any servants, there is *a large boat* in one of my two rooms, the only rooms now in commission. The room 22 x 17—*the boat 16 feet*. The other room is 33 x 17—my living room. *I have no studio*, my water is turned off from the sand pipe, and I regret sincerely to say that I cannot receive a visit from you at this time of year even for a day. My own brothers know better than to come down here. Next Summer if we live I will without fail let you know when the hotels are open & invite you out here & you will find a very beautiful spot & a hearty welcome from me."

His year-round neighbors, the natives of Scarboro, saw another side of him. "He was a kind man and a good neighbor," one of them said to me. "The summer people tried to get at him, but the year-round people treated him like one of themselves." Although he could not stand having visitors criticize his work, his butcher would spend "sometimes a whole hour at a time, sitting and smoking with him, and he would let him tear his pictures all to pieces." Local men and women served as his models; when he had a woman model, it was said, he always made her bring another woman as a chaperone, paid at the same rate. One old drunkard whose wife had left him and who could get no work, he got to pose and work for him, and his influence over the man became so strong that the latter would do anything for him—even stay sober on the job. He was always generous when assistance was needed for the Scarboro church or the poor, and there are many stories of his helping neighbors in need—but always stealthily, so that no one would know. "If you want to know Winslow," said Martha Homer to Beatty, "ask the poor people of Prout's Neck."

From his father he had inherited a large share of the land, which kept him

busy selling lots, building roads, clearing thicket and generally watching over the family properties. In 1901 he built a cottage east of his studio, intending to live there when he grew old. "Other men build houses to live in," he said. "I build this one to die in." But he never occupied it, renting it in the summers. In front of it he built a stone wall with his own hands, signing it with a large H near the entrance. A photograph of himself standing proudly beside it is inscribed: "The poor old man seen here is Winslow Homer." He had bath-houses put up and rented them until he got back what they cost him, in 1908, when he gave them to the Prout's Neck Association, in this characteristic letter: "What is the use of delaying this gift to the Association. I present the Association with the Bathing Houses as they now stand. . . . You will now proceed to attend to your own additions and your own business. I will not bother with it." He and Charles also gave the Association the pine woods that crown the heights, to remain public ground and a bird sanctuary—now one of the most delightful features of the place.

With growing fame his mail increased and he was bothered with all kinds of asinine communications. One woman wrote asking "what was in that barrel" aboard the dory in *The Fog Warning*. Requests for his autograph especially infuriated him. Finally Arthur gave him a rubber stamp of his name and address, saying, "Here, Win, now you can get even with the autograph fiends." His mail was never forwarded when he was away, and a pile of letters would be waiting for him. If the weather was fine they would lie unopened until a rainy day.

His father's old colored servant Lewis now spent the summers at Prout's, living out but helping with cleaning and chores. Homer still did his own cooking, but took some meals at the Checkley House. In the winters he was entirely alone. That his passion for his chosen home was as strong as ever, is shown in a letter one fall to Charles: "You have no idea how fine it is here for me. The sun is low & shines in across my floor all day in my two living rooms. Only think of all the room here with plenty to interest me. I shall stay here until the snow is four inches deep. Then get out. Football, Thanksgiving & other things will make no difference. This is the best place."

XIII

In the early summer of 1908 he had a slight paralytic stroke. One morning he appeared at Arthur's cottage and said, "I don't know what's the matter with me. I have been two hours getting dressed and getting over here." He was dizzy and his eyesight was affected; he would reach for his teacup and miss it by inches. Persuaded to stay at his brother's house, he gradually improved. At the end of two weeks Arthur, going to his room early one morning, found a note: "I am well, and have quit."

On June 2nd he wrote Charles in a tremulous hand quite unlike his usual decided style: "This is the first time I have tried to write & I am quite satisfied with it. Only think of it I shall shave tomorrow morning & if I do I shall call myself well all but tying my neck tie. Thank Heaven." Two days later: "I can paint as well as ever. I think my pictures better for having one eye in the pot & one in the chimney. A new departure in the art world." Despite his illness he did not give up his usual trip to the Adirondacks. Downes had written about his plan for a book, and he replied: "Two weeks ago I found myself utterly unable to write a single word but I am rapidly recovering the power to do so. I cheerfully acknowledge my great obligations to you and I will answer your letter at length when I return from the Adirondacks in about a month."

From Saratoga Springs he reported to Arthur a week later: "*I am very well.* Nothing was wanted but getting out of a stale old rut that had shut down on me." To Charles from the North Woods Club: "I appear to be very well. There is only one thing that I do not understand about my recent illness, that is, that I cannot tie my neck tie in the way that I have done for the past 20 years. It is impossible for me to make that sailors knot. Every four or five days I try to do it but as yet it has been of no use trying. As you see I now can write plain enough, & in all other matters everything is all right. Try & find out what was the matter with me." By late July he was back in Maine. Gradually he gained strength, but looked older and was never again the same man physically. His health preoccupied him as never before; the phrase "I am very well" recurred with defiant insistence in his letters, and he clung tenaciously to the idea of prolonging his life.

"I returned here last Thursday," he wrote Downes, "& I will now answer your letter of June 13th. It may seem ungrateful to you that after your twenty-five years of hard work in booming my pictures that I should not agree with you in regard to that proposed sketch of my life. But I think that it would probably kill me to have such a thing appear, and as the most interesting part of my life is of no concern to the public I must decline to give you any particulars in regard to it. I am making arrangements to live as long as my Father & both my grand Fathers—all of them over eighty-five. By that you may understand that I have given up painting *for good*. No painters colic for me. I have much to see & do in these few years but pictures are out of it. I should like very much to do you some favor for old times sake. I will think up something."

Arthur tried to persuade him to make a list of his paintings and their whereabouts, but he refused. Asked if he knew where they were, he said he did about most of them. "Well, then," said his brother, "why won't you make a list?" "Why should I, so long as I know?" "But nobody else will know after you are gone." "After I am dead I shan't care."

In spite of his recent sickness he stayed on as usual at Prout's Neck into the winter, alone. Strangely enough, his creative urge had come back. Perhaps the shock of illness had made him more keenly aware of the gift of life and how short a time he might have left. In a strain unusual for him he wrote Charles around Thanksgiving Day: "I am so very thankful for all '*His mercies*,' that I now write to you. There is certainly some strange power that has some overlook on me & directing my life. That I am in the right place at present there is no doubt about, as I have found something interesting to work at, in my own field, & time & place & material in which to do it. So much better than loafing about with nothing to do. *I am very well. How are you?*" In early December: "I do not think I shall leave here before January then I shall go directly south to Homosassa after about three days in New York. I am painting when it is light enough, on a most surprising picture but the days are short and sometimes very dark." On December 18th: "Snowing today but much lighter than a bright sunny day, for an indoor light, as the blue sky on a bright day will not give back as much light. The days are very short & I have little enough time to work. I am much interested and I enjoy my home so

very much." Thanking Mattie for a Christmas present: "All is lovely outside my house & inside of my house & myself."

The "most surprising picture" was *Right and Left* (pl. 62). He had bought a pair of wild ducks for Thanksgiving. Their plumage was so handsome that he was tempted to paint them, and before he was through, his Thanksgiving dinner was spoiled. They were shown having just taken wing from the waves and being brought down by two shots from a double-barrelled shotgun. As usual he studied the subject thoroughly, going out day after day with a hunter in a boat and observing the birds' actions when they were shot. He even posted himself on the shore and got the man to shoot towards him, to see what the flash looked like; but he admitted that he never did, for he closed his eyes each time. An odd conception, with all his characteristic ability to create art out of unlikely subjects, the picture is at once engagingly naïve and a brilliant tour de force. The ducks' striking black, white and gray plumage against green waves and gray and pale gold sky, has a decorative beauty that reminds one of Audubon. Compared to his *Wild Geese* of twelve years earlier, the forms are larger and bolder, the pigment fatter, the composition more satisfying, the whole style richer. In these years he had grown as much as in any preceding period. There was no sign of failing powers. His illness had not affected his sharpness of eye or sureness of hand—on the contrary, they had never been more marked.

Sent to Knoedler the end of January 1909, the picture was bought by Randal Morgan of Philadelphia, brother of his friend Charles E. Morgan, for $5,000, $4,000 to the artist. Homer was reluctant to let it go, saying that it belonged in a museum, and consented only because of their friendship.

For almost a year there was no more work, as far as we know. Then in the fall of 1909, just before Thanksgiving, he wrote Arthur: "I rec'd the cigars with thanks. As I must write acknowledge cigars I may as well say that I cannot accept your invitation to Thanksgiving, which as the old maid '*Boston Transcript*' would say was to be expected in the 'Near Future.' *I call it soon.* And so, also quoting that same newspaper who originated the saying, 'Thanking you *in advance,*' & again quoting that old maid newspaper I am still thanking you for '*That long felt*' want—the cigars.

"I breakfast at 7, every [morning]. I have little time for anything, many

letters unanswered & work unfinished. I am painting. I am just through work at 3:30. *Cannot give you any more time.*"

The painting, his last, was *Driftwood* (pl. 63). A small canvas, it was sent to Knoedler the end of November and bought immediately by Frank L. Babbott for $2,800. Great waves piling in from a foam-streaked sea; a man in oilskins salvaging a tree trunk cast up on the rocks. In the varied beauty of greens in the waves, contrasted with the leaden gray sea further out and the deep rosewood rocks, this is one of his richest works in color, though still remaining within the austere range he had adhered to all his life. While small in scale it is one of his most concentrated and powerful paintings. Its quality is that of *On a Lee Shore*—the same purity, the same sense of pattern, the same fine balance between naturalism and decoration. Like all genuine artists, he had continued to grow right up to the end. His last two paintings revealed a mastery and richness such as appear in the culminating works of great artists, like the final ripening of fruit sound at the core.

In these last years he was finally realizing the financial success he had wanted all his life—the usual ironical end of an artist's career. Receiving a check for $6,000 from Knoedler in January 1910 and opening a new account in the bank of his cousin Grenville Norcross, he wrote: "I did not know what to do with that money. My accounts at the Old Colony Trust & the First National Bank of Portland have over $12,000 each & I thought that was enough eggs in each basket. I also have a paid up in full & in trust on another in New York. You will be glad to see that I have been very fortunate in the past few years, & I have now given up business. The money I sent $6,000 was *for one* picture." At his death all but one of the finished oils painted since he settled in Prout's Neck had been disposed of—a record which could probably be equalled by no other American of his time. One contrasts this with the houseful of paintings that Eakins left behind.

In the summer of 1910 his health began to fail. A digestive trouble he had had off and on for several years grew acute. Signs of physical and mental suffering became more apparent every day. But he endured his pain in silence and refused to give up his activities. He resented inquiries about his health, and when his family and friends tried to do anything for him he insisted that he was "all right."

The year before, Downes had sent him fifty questions to answer at his leisure, which he had promised to do. Not having heard a year later, his biographer wrote again, and received this grim reply, dated August 13th: "No doubt, as you say, a man is known by his works. That I have heard at many a funeral. And no doubt in your thoughts it occurred to you in thinking of me. Others are thinking the same thing. One is the Mutual Life Insurance Co., in which I have an annuity. But I will beat you both. I have all your letters, and will answer all your questions in time, *if you live long enough.*"

William Macbeth, the New York dealer, visited him in late August. "What proved to be his last illness had already laid its grip upon him," he wrote, "but in spite of pain he insisted on giving himself to me, and together we roamed over his Prout's Neck possessions, with their many wonderful views, far and near. He found an excuse for going to the farthest point in order to cut out some branches of shrubbery where insects were playing havoc on the grounds of one of his tenants. Girt with a leather belt, in which he carried a formidable pruning blade, he was well prepared for an even more serious fray. 'From this point I painted *The Fox Hunt,*' and so on, pointing to the scene of many a familiar canvas. . . . There were a few unframed water colors and perhaps a dozen others, framed and on his walls, that stirred and delighted me beyond measure. He told me of their expected destination, and I knew that he would never part with them during his lifetime. He knew that his work was over, and, indeed, he had voluntarily abandoned it years before."

Early one morning in the late summer he had an internal hemorrhage, followed by blindness and delirium for several days. Then his mind cleared, but his sight was gone. His brothers thought he would be better off in Arthur's cottage and got ready to move him, but when he was told of the plan he said, "I will stay in my own house." And he stayed. Gradually his strength began to come back, until he was able to sit up a little, though he was still blind. He looked forward to recovery, speaking of plans for the future and of how he would enjoy being able to see again. He even planned a fishing trip to Florida next winter with Charles. As September drew towards its close he would talk with his brothers and review past happenings in his half-ironical tone. "Even with these loved brothers of his," said Downes, "he maintained a certain reticence, a reserve which was so much a

part of his nature that he did not know how to overcome it. In these days they took hope; all appeared to be going on well. On September 17, his nephew Arthur assured me that he was convalescent, and that he had sat up in bed and asked 'how soon he was going to be allowed to have a drink and a smoke.' " Plans were made to take him up to West Townsend, to recuperate in the air of the hills. But on the morning of September 29th a sudden, alarming change took place; his heart grew weak, and he died at half past one in the afternoon, at the age of seventy-four years and seven months. Both his brothers were with him at the end.

Among the scores of obituaries published throughout the country, the one that would have meant most to Homer was that of the Scarboro postmaster: "He was a good man and a good citizen. If any man had a setback he was the first to help him. He was good to the poor. We shall miss him for a long time to come."

The simple funeral took place on October 3rd in the chapel of Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge. Only about twenty-five people were present, and there was no music or eulogy. Afterwards the body was cremated, in accordance with Homer's wishes, and the ashes were buried in the family lot beside his mother's grave. He was in illustrious company; in the same burying ground lie Longfellow, Holmes, Lowell, Prescott, Parkman and many other New Englanders who contributed richly to the life of America.

XIV

Homer and Thomas Eakins were the chief American representatives of the naturalistic movement initiated in France by Courbet. Revolting against the stale romanticism of the mid-century, they turned to the life around them, thus becoming pioneers in that picturing of the American scene that is still one of our leading trends. Before their time our art had been chiefly portraiture and romantic landscape. A few genre painters such as Mount, Bingham and Blythe had painted everyday life honestly and with humor. But Homer's range was far wider, his viewpoint more mature. In his early work the contemporary social scene was represented with a realism and raciness new in our art. He was the first to paint American women and their activities with

unsentimental pleasure, to express the idyllicism of childhood without mawkishness, to picture country life truthfully yet with a sense of the poetry of the earth. As he matured his subjects became more serious and masculine. His paintings of sailors, fishermen and hunters showed aspects of primitive American life never before represented with such power. In them an important side of our national character—our adventurousness, our love of physical activity, our feeling for wild nature—found their first mature utterance. His epic of the sea and the wilderness will always remain the classic expression of these elemental themes.

Almost purely objective in viewpoint, he never tried to express subjective emotions, but rather to create true and powerful images of the aspects of the real world that stirred him. Beginning as an illustrator, he remained a storyteller all his life, even in his non-human subjects. The play of natural forces, the sea's changing moods, man's struggle with nature—all furnished themes for an art that was essentially dramatic. It was an extrovert art, delighting in action and movement, in health and energy. More intimate emotions had no voice in it. There was little feeling for the individual actors; the action itself was what interested him. His people were types rather than individuals. The parts they played were more important than their quality as human beings.

In its evolution his art moved between the poles of femininity and masculinity. The feminine element was strongest in his early work, which was much preoccupied with women, though far from the frank sensuousness of Manet or Renoir. His early style was marked by refinement as much as by the strength we usually associate with him. During his English period this feminine influence was transformed; his women became heroic types, seen more and more impersonally and remotely. From the time he settled in Maine, women gradually disappeared from his art. His world became one of men and nature, and his style grew more energetic and masculine. Then nature took the dominant role, until in his late marines humanity no longer had a part. Even the detached human interest of his early years was gone. Sexual emotion, that deep source of art, had been sublimated out of all recognition. The sensuousness on which all great art rests had remained undeveloped. To this sexlessness, typical of much American painting of the time, we can ascribe the externality of his art. With all its great vitality, it never

achieved the emotional richness of the supreme creator. It pictured the outer world with ever-growing power and mastery, but with no greater passion.

His work was based on an unusually direct relation to nature, with less outside influence than almost any painter of his generation. By contrast with his contemporaries, who were looking more and more to France for leadership, he spoke in accents strongly original and strongly American. Into the provincial art world of his youth, with its belated echoes of foreign trends, he introduced an unabashed native note. If any artist of modern times can be called self-made, it was he. America offered little in the way of tradition, and his first European trip, made when he was already a pronounced individual, left no real mark. Incapable of learning from others, he built his own art. He was slow to mature; but he kept on growing right up to the end. Never content to follow a rut, he struck out continually into new paths. This extraordinary capacity for growth was one of his chief characteristics. His story is that of a self-taught artist's struggle to create art out of the raw material of American life—and as such, an epitome of our national artistic development. With all its limitations, his art was a long step in the direction that America had to follow to reach artistic maturity—by growth from within more than influences from without.

One could say of him what Cézanne said of Monet: "He is an eye—but what an eye!" His originality sprang from his fresh vision, unadulterated by reminiscences of other men's styles. He was an eye more than an artistic intelligence. He was never remarkable for taste or sophistication. His philosophy from first to last was simple naturalism—to paint nature "exactly as it appears"—and he never showed any clear conception of the distinction between naturalism and art. The artistic virtues of his early work were unconscious, products of an innocent eye and an instinctive sense of line, color and pattern. But he himself was unaware of these virtues; instead of cultivating them, he followed the path of increasingly able naturalism and more conscious composition. The first results were not always happy. There was a conflict between the true eye and the limited artistic taste. Homer was no Ryder, evolving forms from his own mind. He was a recorder of the external world, and needed to maintain direct contact with it. The further he got from firsthand visual sensations, the more he lost his instinctive artistic virtues.

But by the 1890's he attained a more integrated viewpoint. He came to understand that painting is more than the imitation of nature, that out of the raw material of visual phenomena the painter selects certain aspects from which he produces art. He now studied nature more intelligently than in his youth. He abstracted her color, mass and pattern; he selected, he simplified, he composed. Conventionalized composition was replaced by more original design. The sensuous qualities that had been instinctive in his youth were recaptured, but now fully conscious. His oils gained some of the direct-from-nature quality of his watercolors, while at the same time improving on the watercolors in power and completeness. But always, right up to the end, there remained a split between the direct vision of the watercolors and the planned style of the oils. His oils never caught up with his watercolors in brilliancy, economy of means, essential artistry, nor in that pure visual sensuousness that was the most precious element in his art, and without which naturalistic competence was worthless.

All his life he remained fundamentally naïve. He never purged his art entirely of non-artistic elements. Always it was a combination of non-artistic naturalism and more purely artistic values. Lacking the deeply emotional apprehension of form that the supreme formal masters have had, he was a powerful naturalist rather than a great plastic artist. When he transcended the limits of naturalism it was to achieve decorative values rather than the greatest kind of design, that of round form in deep space. The artistic qualities we enjoy in his work were never the fundamental plastic ones, but the secondary beauties of color, values, line, pattern, skill of execution.

Homer belongs not among the few masters of creative design, but in the more numerous company of great naturalists and illustrators. He painted certain elemental things that had never before been painted with the same power and utter authenticity. He loved the wildest, most solitary aspects of nature—sea, forest and mountains—and the hardy men who inhabited them. These themes he painted with extraordinary strength, largeness and truth. His art was uniquely close to nature, the primordial source of all art. It seemed a part of nature, having the salt breath of the sea and the smell of pines. Above all it possessed that fundamental vitality that is an essential element of all enduring art.

RECOLLECTIONS OF AN

INTIMATE FRIENDSHIP

BY

JOHN W. BEATTY

FOREWORD

JOHN W. BEATTY was trained as an artist and practised his profession before he became the first director of the Department of Fine Arts of Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh. Although his official duties prevented him from devoting all his time to painting, in later years he produced a group of landscapes which rank high among the achievements of American impressionism.

Long before he met Winslow Homer, Beatty was an admirer of his work. It was due to him that Homer was represented in almost every International Exhibition at the Institute, and that the exhibition of 1908 included the largest group of his paintings shown during his lifetime. Twice he persuaded Homer to serve on the International Jury of Award. In the last ten years of the artist's life Beatty was one of his few close friends in the profession. Their tastes and viewpoints were congenial, and he was among the very few people who succeeded in getting Homer to talk about painting and who recorded his remarks. The original notes of their conversations during his visit to Prout's Neck in 1903, made at the time, are still in possession of the Beatty family.

The following reminiscences, never before published, were written in 1923 and 1924. In writing them Beatty made use of his notes of 1903. He died before he had completed the final revision, and with the consent of his family and the cooperation of his daughter, Miss Helen M. Beatty, the writer has prepared the manuscript for publication.

I wish to make grateful acknowledgment of the generosity of Mrs. John W. Beatty and Miss Helen M. Beatty in permitting me to publish these reminiscences.

L. G.

RECOLLECTIONS OF AN INTIMATE FRIENDSHIP

BY

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Winslow Homer and I were not old friends. We met for the first time in 1897 when he visited the Carnegie Institute as a member of the International Jury of Award. His works, however, I had known intimately for many years.

Certain impressions remain fixed in the memory throughout the years and come back to us repeatedly with all their original vividness. Some years before meeting Homer, one day when I was walking up Fifth Avenue in New York, I came suddenly upon a painting by Homer displayed in a shop window. I stood for many minutes, my face pressed against the plate glass, my eyes shaded from the side lights, gazing at the canvas. The memory comes back to me now, as if it were but yesterday, of the moonlight on the water and the dancing figures. I was later to have the pleasure of seeing many of Homer's stirring works but that first impression has never been effaced.

It was several years after seeing this painting that I met Homer; and a few years later I visited him at Prout's Neck. My visit had been postponed several times. In January 1903, when I had suggested coming to see him, he wrote: "I am very sorry that you have not noticed the weather reports in regard to this place. It would be a most unwise & foolish thing to do if I should ask you to come here at this time of year. Although a beautiful place in summer with many hotels from July to October, after that I am the only one here & the nearest Hotel is at Portland & it is impossible for me to entertain you. I live four miles from the railroad & I do not keep a team. I have no servant. Some times for two days people cannot clear the road. The fact is you must not come here & I am extremely sorry for it. Come in the summer & welcome. . . . I stay here just now as it is the only time of year that any interest is shown in art matters & this is my only address."

My first visit to Prout's Neck was in early September, 1903, and upon my arrival at Scarboro, the nearest point on the railroad, I found Mr. Homer awaiting me. At the rear of the station stood a patient horse and an old-fashioned buggy in which he had driven from Prout's Neck. The horse was tethered by a bell-shaped iron weight. This was placed in the buggy and the drive home began.

The morning was perfect. The air was fresh and invigorating, with a tang of the sea and salt marsh pervading it. It was still and luminous without the glare of sunlight; one of those wonderful mornings that follow a storm at sea. It was what is known as a painter's gray day; a day when all of nature's beauty is apparent and when it is a delight to paint, or to simply live and enjoy. The effect was the very antithesis of the stormy aspect of the ocean so dear to Homer, but he was fully conscious of the quiet beauty with which we were surrounded and he remarked it with keen appreciation.

I am sure nothing of moment was discussed as we jogged along during the hour's drive unless a reference by Mr. Homer to a basket of unusually fine ale which had come by express from Providence and which was in the back of the buggy, be considered important. One passing remark, however, made by Homer impressed me deeply. "I have given up the business," he said. "I have quit painting. We will do nothing but fish and have a good time." In a letter a few months before he had written that he had "retired from business for good." Heard now for the second time, this statement arrested my attention.

Presently we approached Prout's Neck and heard the reiterated boom of the surf along the rock-bound coast. Prout's Neck was not much to look at twenty years ago. The old Checkley House, the most important if not the only hotel, was a frail wooden structure which literally hung over the ocean's edge. Beyond it and as far as the eye could reach, stretched the rugged shore line, an abrupt ledge of slate-colored rocks, from which one looked down on the restless surging ocean. The very atmosphere of the place seemed, as I stood on this rocky ledge for the first time, to breathe the spirit of Winslow Homer; or rather, *On a Lee Shore, Northeaster* and a dozen other paintings seemed to be here in very truth. It seemed as if I knew these scenes by heart.

At the extreme eastern end of the Neck, not more than a mile from the

Checkley House and Homer's studio, a point of land projected into the sea. There Homer had erected a small booth, open towards the sea. From this point of vantage, protected from the storm on three sides at least, he painted a number of his most notable works.

The subjects of all Homer's Maine coast paintings were found between this point and his studio. Here it was that he waited for the stormy periods because he thought these the most vital and interesting. He knew every part of this short stretch of shore perfectly and studied it under varying conditions of light and weather. He walked along the ledge daily and these things were as well known to him as his brushes.

The studio was an extremely plain story-and-a-half frame building, without a trace of architectural pretension. Along the front, on the second floor, was a balcony of liberal size. At one side of the studio was a garden of hardy flowers. In this Homer took great pride and devoted much time to its cultivation. He was extremely fond of flowers, not only enjoying them for their beauty but using them sometimes to express affection and regard. It was his daily custom to place on the desk of his sister-in-law, Mrs. Charles Homer, a few old-fashioned pinks or a spray of wild flowers.

In front of the studio was a broad expanse of native shrubs, I think huckleberry bushes, and through these ran a winding path to the sea. To the left stood a cottage owned by Homer, which he rented for the summers. In this cottage hung a dozen or more of his masterly West Indian watercolors. "I throw them in," he said, "because I don't want to sell them." I think this cottage was erected by Homer with the thought of creating a fixed if modest income. He is credited with saying once that if he only had the assured income of an ordinary clerk he would be content. Moreover it gave him an interest and some occupation through the summer. I remember that in 1908, when I had assembled twenty-two of his most important canvases in an exhibition that offered the only opportunity within his lifetime to review his life work, he wrote me giving as one reason for not visiting Pittsburgh the fact that he was having a roof put on the studio and the Marr cottage was being painted. His letter was characteristic in that he expressed no special interest in the exhibition; in fact, he did not even mention it.

The interior of Homer's studio was as plain as the exterior. It was a mere

workshop. At one side was a large table covered with tubes of paint, brushes and other materials. In the center stood a small stove, to heat the room. On the walls were fishing rods and other articles for fishing and hunting. A few sketches, as I remember, hung on the walls. That was about all. This unpretentious building was Homer's castle and few interruptions were permitted when he was engaged in painting.

It was here that Homer spent the last twenty-five years of his life, alone during the winter season and much secluded during the summer. One gets a glimpse of his solitary life in the letter just referred to, in which he tells of his studio being robbed while he was away, among the things taken being "four pistols, two sling shots, lots of old coins, & other things with which I amused myself long winter evenings." These brief references to his solitude bring to us most vividly the actual loneliness of his life during these years. He must have spent many hours in pure contemplation. There must also have been many opportunities to study the varying aspects of the ocean when it was impossible to paint out-of-doors, and the mental impressions received undoubtedly formed images of the sea in Homer's mind which influenced him deeply. Perfect familiarity with the sea under stress was a dominating factor in his development.

I do not know how many paintings Homer made of this comparatively short part of the coast, but the total number of important marines produced by him was not large. I asked him one evening if he ever kept a record of the pictures he painted. "Why, certainly not, certainly not," he replied. "I never thought of doing such a thing. Why should I? I received all the pleasure out of painting the pictures. They went to Knoedler or some other dealer, who sold them, and I don't care where they are." Asked how many paintings he had made, he said, "I don't know." When I suggested two hundred, he seemed startled and promptly said, using his favorite expression, "Certainly not. I think," he added, "if you mean my important paintings, probably twenty-five." This seemed a small number of works when I considered his great reputation at that time; but real fame is dependent upon quality and not upon quantity.

Homer was an ideal host. His thoughtfulness never flagged. His fine consideration was a source of constant pleasure. How exacting he was may

be seen from an incident which occurred during a later visit in 1907. One morning I suggested that I would like to take the train the following day and run down to Ogunquit to see Woodbury. Charles Homer promptly placed one of his automobiles at my service. Homer presently came to me and asked if I would mind if he requested his brother Arthur to go to Ogunquit with me in his stead, adding that he literally hated an automobile. He said he would rather have a hangman's cap put on his head than ride in what he termed a honking machine, rushing through towns at the risk of life and limb. I protested that no one need go, but it was arranged that Arthur should accompany me. Later in the day Homer came to me and quietly remarked, "I have decided to go to Ogunquit with you tomorrow." My protest was unavailing and he accompanied me on the trip, but I knew all the time that his going was prompted by his high conception of his duty as my host.

A clambake arranged one day in my honor gave me an opportunity to meet half a dozen or more of Homer's closest friends, natives of Prout's Neck. The meeting with these friends threw an interesting sidelight on his manner of life because they were his intimates. They were plain, common-sense men who might easily have followed either the sea or the plow. Their conversation was practical, earnest and intelligent. On a great pile of boulders, heated to a high temperature, a quantity of luscious lobsters, clams and sweet corn had been steamed, and to these was added the nut-brown ale brought from the studio. It was a jolly party, but there was no discussion about art, much to Homer's relief I think.

During my visit a storm swept the north Atlantic coast. No such tempestuous weather had been experienced at Prout's Neck within the memory of the oldest inhabitant. The wind blew a gale. The driving rain slanted sharply under porch awnings, and the summer visitors gathered about wood fires, with complaining voices. Great clouds of mist drove across the deserted rocks and the sound of the ocean rose to an ominous pitch, as wave after wave broke upon the rugged shore. Homer was in a fever of excitement, and searched for an extra palette and colors that I might join him in painting, arranging everything so that we might not lose a moment when the rain should abate. While waiting we paced the coast, clad in heavy raincoats.

Sometimes we clung to the wiry shrubs that grow from the crevices between the rocks; at other times we braced ourselves against the driving wind as best we could. Homer was in his element. He watched the shifting clouds with intense interest and was alive to every changing mood. It was for this he had waited; for this he was always ready, sometimes with his palette all set for work. A remark of his, "You must wait and wait patiently until the effect comes," came back to me with all its fullness of meaning.

The days of this first visit remain in my memory as a delightful experience. It was our daily custom to take a long walk along the shore. Homer found one of his chief pleasures in fishing, and we made many trips on the sea in a powerboat for this purpose. The early evenings were invariably spent in the home of Charles Homer, but after dinner Winslow Homer and I made our way to his studio where we had what he called a nightcap. This usually consisted of a mug of ale and a mild cigar.

We found many subjects of conversation during these quiet evening hours in the studio. Many of these, of course, were unassociated with Homer's career as a painter. But I remember others that were intimately related to his art. One night the talk turned on the art of the etcher. This topic prompted Homer to bring from the upper shelf of a corner closet two proofs of his etching, *Eight Bells*. They had remained in the closet for many years, or since the plate was etched, and it was with some difficulty that they were made to remain open. Homer finally brought from the studio table four weights, found among the tubes and brushes, and these held the rebellious proofs in position. Later I picked up the weights and was surprised to find that they were four gold medals.

Homer said he had never received a lesson in etching. He read books describing the process, made inquiry among his friends who knew the art and then worked his own way out. He generously inscribed one of these two rare proofs to me and this, with a small tortoise-shell stamp box constantly used by him and sent to me by Mrs. Charles Homer after Winslow's death, are charming mementos of my visit to Prout's Neck.

There come to my mind other evening talks which took place either on this first visit or on subsequent visits. When he expressed an opinion about the work of a fellow artist, which was not often, it was definite and incisive.

Asked what he thought of Whistler, he said, "I am surprised because he did not leave more works." I replied that he left a noble work in his mother's portrait. "Yes," he answered, "I know. His mother's portrait and Carlyle are important pictures, but I don't think those symphonies and queer things Ruskin objected to will live any great while. A few other things are knocking about, but his mother and Carlyle are the important ones."

During the expression of this opinion he was moving from place to place, securing paper and matches to start a fire in the open stove, because I had complained of the chill evening outside. After a pause of several minutes he continued, without direct reference to Whistler, "La Farge once painted 'Dickie' Richardson, the architect's boy. Well, that portrait lasted La Farge twenty years. Yes, twenty years. It was a carefully painted portrait. Then he got into the stained glass business and in that he has made a great success." Homer evidently was mentally comparing Whistler's record with that of La Farge, and his thought seemed to be that the reputation of each rested upon a comparatively few important works.

Very rarely did he refer to a painter in this manner, or indulge in even the mildest criticism. His attitude seemed to be one of either friendly interest or mental reserve. He seemed to attach as much importance to the general character of a work of art, as to the technical qualities. His point of view seemed to be that of a non-professional, keen observer, rather than that of a technician.

One evening in the studio, following some reference to his boyhood, Homer showed me a small copy he had made as a child, of a landscape, English in character, and as nearly as I can recall it now, representing a cottage, mill and a stream in the distance. The original was manifestly a carefully painted little picture, such as a student might make at an art school; and the copy was done with equal care. It was dated 1847, when he was eleven years old. The original was painted by his mother. By way of explanation he said that his mother took lessons in Boston when she was a girl. This suggests the source of his early interest in drawing.

"Mrs. Homer was a dear lady," said Mrs. Charles Homer, referring to Winslow's mother. "She was charming in every way and mentally very alert. She was fond of young people and especially interested in their plans

and doings. She always felt a special interest in art. When Winslow's painting, *The Life Line*, was purchased by Miss Catharine Wolfe, who was then forming her collection, Mrs. Homer said that Winslow hastened to his mother's home to tell her the good news." Next to Mrs. Homer's interest in drawing and painting was her love of flowers, which Winslow also inherited.

"Winslow's father," Mrs. Charles Homer said, "was an unusually attractive man. He was always interested to some extent in drawing and the like. He often said, 'Anyone can learn to draw.' "

Homer was not inclined at any time to talk about himself, but one evening, in a reminiscent mood, he gave me a brief record of his early career. He said that his father was not able to help him, being rather unfortunate in business matters. The choice of lithography as a profession was in some measure the result of a mere coincidence. His father read in a Boston paper an advertisement for an apprentice in a lithographing shop. The advertiser happened to be an old acquaintance of his father's and that had some sentimental influence with him. His father said, "That's the very thing for you, Winslow." The boy had always shown a liking for drawing. He was promptly entered as an apprentice in the lithographing shop. The usual terms were three hundred dollars to be paid the master for the first year. The next two years the student was to receive five dollars a week. However, one hundred dollars instead of three hundred dollars were accepted for the first year's instruction, in view of the aptitude shown in his sketches.

He served the three years* and about the only incident he mentioned was the fact that he made a large oval portrait for some business or political purpose, doing one portrait each day for a considerable time. "The price received for each portrait by the proprietor," he said, "was thirty-five dollars, while I meanwhile received five dollars per week." At the end of the three years he quit the lithographing business for good, and as he said, "never again worked for wages." He remarked with some pathos in his voice that while other boys were enjoying boyish play, he had his nose to the grindstone from eight in the morning until six in the evening, and that about his only recre-

*G. W. Sheldon in the *Art Journal*, August 1878, says: "He stayed for two years, or until he was twenty-one."

ation was an occasional hour's fishing in the early morning on his way to the shop. He said he would get up early, fish an hour, and then push his rod under some bushes to await another time.

He was, as I remember, eighteen when he entered the lithographing shop and consequently twenty-one when he opened a studio in Boston with the purpose of making drawings for the illustrated papers. He remarked that the Harpers were always very kind, taking all the drawings he made, and paying him at the rate of one hundred dollars for a full-page drawing. At the opening of the Civil War, he found much demand for his drawings and at one time left the city to make war sketches. The price was to be twenty-five dollars for each page sketch on paper, the drawing on boxwood to be made at the magazine office. This worked out only moderately well, because the paper frequently reduced his sketches, placing four on a page and paying twenty-five dollars for the four, whereas he had expected a hundred dollars.

One of the last drawings he made was *Snap the Whip*. For some reason which I do not now remember, it was badly reproduced, or the transaction was unsatisfactory, and he did not make many more, turning his attention thereafter to painting.

Homer was essentially a self-taught painter. His instruction was limited to a comparatively brief period in the night school of the Academy of Design. What is known as skillful brushwork did not interest him at any time. His technical methods were his own. How extremely simple, almost naïve, they were was revealed by something he said to me about *The Wreck*. In this painting the seamen all wear oilskins, the color of which is repeated throughout the picture. Homer said that he took no chance of losing this color note, but prepared a small quantity of the exact color he desired and kept this under water, modifying its strength from time to time as he desired.

I think it is safe to assume that Homer in his two visits to Europe gave little thought to the technical side of art and that his study of the old masters, if indeed he gave much thought to them, had reference to the broad principles of art rather than to the methods employed. This limitation, if it be considered a limitation, did not in the long run prevent him from producing works of great strength and majesty.

As I walked along the shore one day I thought of Homer's remark, made in the course of the drive from Scarboro, that he had "given up the business." Several times during our conversations he repeated that he had quit work, that he was not going to paint any more. "What's the use," he said once, "I don't get any more pleasure out of it, and I have retired." His brother told me: "A stranger met Winslow the other day in the pine woods and said, 'Are you Winslow Homer, the painter?' Winslow replied, 'I used to be engaged in that business!' " Again his brother said that he frequently remarked, "Well, I have the goods now if they want them." His one dominant thought seemed to be that it was not worth while to paint. He referred to painting as a business, "just like any other business."

"Don't you suppose," he said one day, as we walked along the rocky shore, and I remarked that he ought to be down there at work, "don't you suppose, if there were any use, I would be down there in a minute? Of course I would." "It is," he presently said, "spend one dollar and get back 33⅓ cents. Nobody cares anything about it. Why should I worry and work, unless I feel like it? I have a competence, and need no longer fear the poorhouse. I will paint only when I want to, and for my own pleasure. Nothing else is worth-while."

Often he said that he had passed the age limit. I said, "Nonsense! I have an uncle who is acting librarian in Allegheny College. Only a few weeks since he told me that at the end of next year he hoped to retire, because he would then enter his ninetieth year. What do you think of that?" I said. "What do I think of that?" retorted Homer. "I think what my nephew thought when his father told him about the boy standing on the burning deck, whence all but he had fled. 'He was a darn fool,' the boy said."

When he said, "Now that I have quit painting," it was as if he were saying, "Now that she is gone"—with an indescribable sense of pathos. "Yes, I only painted for pleasure, and now that it has ceased to give me pleasure there is no object left. I get lots more pleasure out of other things now; I would rather go fishing. Oh, I suppose that if there was the hope of great financial gain, that would be an incentive."

All of this gave me rather conflicting thoughts about Homer. To one coming into his seclusion, his attitude was unaccountable. Certainly it was

not the result of bitterness engendered by poverty. He was well-to-do, and owned much land at Prout's Neck. His reputation at that time among the painters of the world was at its height. His masterly *Summer Night* had been purchased by the Luxembourg Gallery. To the gold medal awarded by the Carnegie Institute had been added many other honors. No name in modern art stood higher or was spoken in the studios of America with deeper and more sincere regard. Moreover, he was at that time producing some of his most powerful works.

Nevertheless, the feeling that he had not been understood, that it was not worth-while, that the average man had little comprehension of art, seemed to be uppermost in his mind at that time. The Luxembourg picture went "kicking about" the country for a good while, he said, before it was finally sent to France and purchased. These thoughts seemed to come to him frequently, but he was averse to discussing this phase of his experience except as it incidentally came into the conversation.

Looking back in memory upon these days, at the end of many years, there comes to me the impression of a small, reserved gentleman, quiet of manner and unostentatious, but manifestly thoughtful and observing. He never assumed a superior degree of knowledge, but when he did express an opinion it was clear-cut and definite. Indeed, I think great precision in manner and expression was one of Homer's strong characteristics. His exactness I had already noted in his correspondence. He invariably went straight to the point. There was never a word wasted or an irrelevant thought suggested. He always used the simplest means of expression. Sometimes, referring in his letters to a particular picture, instead of writing a description, he would make a small sketch. These sketches, incorporated as a part of the writing, served his purpose more perfectly than written language.

Another dominant trait was his absolute integrity. I do not mean integrity in the usual business sense, but in the higher sense of perfect fairness in all things. His simple honesty never wavered. He never left undone anything which it seemed to him to be his duty to do, even in the simplest matter. He remarked to me one day with reference to *The Wreck* that he had painted the picture on an old canvas, and added, "If you ever see a three-masted schooner coming through the sky, please let me know and I will fix it."

Such incidents, unimportant in themselves, are indications of his attitude towards the performance of his every duty. He was scrupulously exact in little matters as well as in larger things. To these qualities should be added unqualified straightforwardness. In speaking of him one day Mrs. Charles Homer said to me, "Winslow hated a lie." This seemed to epitomize his essential character.

On the surface Homer was sometimes brusque, but at heart he was gentle, affectionate and always sympathetic with those less fortunate than himself. His interest in his neighbors, the fishermen at Prout's Neck, was frequently shown. He knew these people well, met them frequently, and was familiar with their thoughts and needs. Once he learned of a poor fellow who had lost a leg and needed a wooden one. This presently came to him, quietly and unostentatiously. In telling me about this incident, Mrs. Charles Homer added, "If you want to know Winslow, ask the poor people of Prout's Neck."

Another side of his character was that of almost childlike simplicity. I was deeply impressed by this quality as it was revealed from day to day during my first visit. In one of my letters home at this time I wrote: "I have long since had the opinion that Homer is possessed of a deal of native shrewdness and business sense, and I still have this opinion; but he has another side, and it is that of a child. He seems to be a simple child of nature."

This side of his character, doubtless in some measure a result of his solitary life, was illustrated on one occasion when I had called to see him at his hotel in New York, an old-time inn on Sixteenth Street, I think. In the course of my visit I took occasion to telephone to John W. Alexander. When I resumed my seat, Homer, with a quizzical expression, said, "Would you mind telling me how you did that?" When I had explained the method of calling a number, he said he was sorry he had not known this before, as he had desired to reach Roland Knoedler in haste, but not understanding "that thing" he had written a letter.

I remember another incident which indicates his secluded life. In 1897 he was elected a member of the Carnegie Institute International Jury of Award. The jury that year was an exceptionally strong one. John La Farge came, accompanied by his Japanese servant from whom he was inseparable in those years; also Frank Duveneck, William M. Chase, Will H. Low,

Cecilia Beaux, Frank W. Benson and Edmund C. Tarbell. Homer was not particularly interested in exhibitions and his long journey from Prout's Neck to Pittsburgh was looked upon by his professional brethren as a very unusual service. He was considered a rather austere man, wholly given up to his work and little interested in juries or their doings. Although his reputation at that time was at its zenith, few of his fellow painters had ever met him. A few of the older men, the painters of the old Tenth Street Studios, knew him, but many artists who had come into prominence about the time the Society of American Artists was organized had never seen him. Much interest was aroused by the announcement that he would be a member of the jury. We were all, myself included, keen to meet the man who had achieved such a reputation.

The evening that he was due to arrive I was waiting for him on the station platform. When the train pulled into the station Frank Duveneck got off. After greeting him, I asked for Homer. "Winslow Homer?" he said. "He wasn't on the train." I hesitated, because Homer had telegraphed that he would come by that train, and I was just turning away when I saw Homer, with a little bag, coming along the platform. "There's Homer," I exclaimed. "Why," said Duveneck, "that's the little chap I rode with in the smoker all the way over the mountains, and we talked about everything but art. Finally the little gentleman asked for the name of a hotel in Pittsburgh and I gave him the name of the hotel you had given me." Neither of them was more surprised than the other, but Duveneck was the only one to express emotion. Homer, on this occasion as on all others, was self-contained and unemotional.

On this visit Homer's chief interest was in the work of the jury. As a member of the jury he was always prompt in attendance, quick in his decisions, and earnest in the performance of every official duty, even to the point of objecting to any interruption of the work. His second interest was in the early history of Fort Duquesne and the old blockhouse at the junction of the two rivers, a relic of the French and Indian wars. His first inquiry was about this fort, and he wanted almost at once to see it. It developed that he knew the whereabouts and history of nearly every fort of this character in the United States.

During these years of seclusion on the Maine coast Homer's thoughts were almost wholly centered in his work and home and in the people with whom he was immediately surrounded, especially in the members of his two brothers' families; but one may be very sure that he looked out upon the larger world with philosophical and contemplative interest.

The chief qualities which made up Homer's character were, I think, simplicity, earnestness, absolute honesty, concentration on his art and a straightforward manner of thinking and acting. These qualities account for the direct and forceful character of his paintings. When it came to representing the essential truth, as truth appeared to him in nature, he knew no deviation from a straight course; and truth to Homer finally, at the end of many years' study, appeared first and foremost in broad and commanding masses. He saw clearly and he saw broadly. He never emphasized unimportant details. Even his earliest paintings, and his drawings published in *Harper's Weekly* before he had fully committed himself to the use of color, exhibit the same breadth of vision. This quality was more and more developed throughout his career and reached its highest expression in his late watercolors.

In addition to breadth, he laid special stress upon the importance of securing the exact relationship between a few dominating values. Referring to this one day he said, "I have never tried to do anything but get the true relationship of values; that is, the values of dark and light and the values of color. It is wonderful," he added, "how much depends upon the relationship of black and white. Why, do you know, a black and white, if properly balanced, suggests color. The construction, the balancing of the parts is everything. You can make a black and white almost perfect and carry a little color—of course, if it is a figure picture that is important. But when I paint one of my simple seascapes, the question is the truth of the values."

Once when we were picking our way along the shore, over the shelving rocks he painted so often, I suddenly said, "Homer, do you ever take the liberty, in painting nature, of modifying the color of any part?" I recall his manner and expression perfectly. Arresting his steps for an instant, he firmly clenched his hand, and bringing it down with a quick action, exclaimed: "Never! Never! When I have selected the thing carefully, I paint it exactly as it appears."

Always he insisted upon this: the importance of getting the truth from nature.

When I asked him if he made a calculation for the difference in the strength of light out-of-doors and in a gallery, and as a result forced his color or strengthened his values to provide for the drop in tone under lower light, he said, "Certainly not. I try to paint truthfully what I see, and make no calculations;" but he promptly added, revealing his desire to consider fairly the suggestion, "I would not say that that is not a good and proper method to pursue. Yes, that might be a good and just method; but I have always thought that my pictures looked better when lowered in tone by the weaker light of a gallery or house."

One evening he asked me how I liked the watercolors in the cottage that he rented. I replied, "They seem to me to be very brilliant. I think you hit them hard, as the painters say. That is, it seems to me that, while preserving a perfect adjustment of values, you went even a little beyond the strength of nature, to the end that your pictures would not suffer when placed in a low light."

"No, never, never," said Homer. "I never try to make things stronger than they actually are in nature."

"Well," I said, "I do not doubt that you do this as you see the values, but you know perfectly well, if you would place a piece of canvas against the sky and literally match the color so that the canvas would be like the sky, this piece of canvas would look several degrees lower in tone when placed in a home than it did in the strong outdoor light. At the end of a long life of experiment and labor," I said, "you probably unconsciously make the just allowance."

"Well, probably I do, probably I do."

He told me that he always painted direct from nature and in the open light of day. This was his almost invariable rule; but it did not mean that he never touched a canvas after taking it to his studio. "Of course," he said, "I go over them in the studio and put them in shape."

He said that when painting *The Fox Hunt* he took no chances on securing the exact color or the relationship between the color notes. He placed the skin of a fox over a barrel and put it in the snow near his studio.

Homer not only understood perfectly the importance of seeing aright, of selecting with discrimination, but also of securing the transient effect, the spirit of the moment. This was indicated by a letter in which he said, "You will be glad to hear that I am painting again. *I work hard every afternoon* from 4:30 to 4:40, that being the limit of the light that I represent, the title of my picture being '*Early Evening.*'" This shows that he was inspired by the very spirit of impressionism. I have never heard of him expressing any special interest in the impressionists, and think it probable that he arrived at this by himself. Born of an earlier age, trained, so far as he was trained at all, in a different school, he nevertheless grasped for himself a vital principle, that the momentary impression is of greater importance than mere details. To secure this he painted in the presence of nature and sometimes resorted to unusual means to try out a painting as it progressed; to discover whether or not he was securing the exact effect he desired. He said he would sometimes hang a canvas on the balcony outside of his studio, where he could study it from a distance of seventy-five feet. "I could see," he said, "the least thing that was out."

Although such remarks suggest that Homer approached nature in a very simple and direct manner, relying almost wholly upon his impression at the moment, it must not be assumed that he neglected any means in his pursuit of truth. He studied the principles of art, and especially the laws governing color harmony, with much interest.

At times in talking to him one felt that he painted his wonderful canvases without knowing his power, just as the strapping farmer boy turns over a great log without being conscious that he is doing anything remarkable. But at other times one was startled out of this position by some remark about the scientific study of the influence of complementary colors one upon another, or the relation of color notes in juxtaposition. For instance he said, "You can't get along without a knowledge of the principles and rules governing the influence of one color upon another. A mechanic might as well try to get along without tools." But a little later, in the presence of nature, he would say, "There it is! You simply have to get it right."

I said, "Well, I don't see how you square this with your opinion of the importance of rules. If it is there, and you simply have to get it with absolute

truth, there it is, and what have you to do with the rules governing color? If you get it with justness and truth it is a law unto itself."

"Well, yes!" he said. "But for instance there is that stove. If you are going to paint it, you first draw the upright at one side. Then comes in your knowledge of perspective and you unconsciously are influenced by the rules as you work. You simply can't do without them."

"Not a parallel case," I replied. "Of course a knowledge of perspective helps you in the drawing, but we were not talking about drawing. We were talking about color, and taking you on your own ground, there it is, a definite quality of gray sky; beneath, a definite quality of greenish gray water; and the rocks. You simply, in the matter of color, have got to get it, and I don't see how rules apply."

"Well, yes, that's so," he said. "You simply have to get the truth of it, as you see it; but the knowledge of the influence of one color upon another is necessary anyhow. You can't do it unless you know when you put down one positive color what influence that color is going to have on the color next to it."

One day I picked up from his table a copy of Chevreul's well-known book on the laws of color, and without revealing my surprise, asked if he found it of value. He replied simply, "It is my Bible."

These incidents throw light on Homer's philosophy of art, establishing the fact that he was a thoughtful and thorough student, mentally alert and working with extreme precision. He was interested in every aid offered by science. In no other way can his power be accounted for; because if there is one universal law perfectly established, it is that success waits for those who are willing to pay the price in study and effort.

Sometimes he referred to months of hard work at this place or that, when he exhausted every known means to secure the desired end. In England he hired a garden with a great wall about it, and for a long period painted figures, posing them and working out every detail until he was satisfied he could do no more; then took his canvas and models to the seacoast, where, as he expressed it, "I would in a couple of hours, with the thing right before me, secure the truth of the whole impression."

"Homer," I once asked, "do you ever paint a picture with which you

are perfectly satisfied?" "The first picture I ever painted," he replied, "was the only one I considered perfect. I thought there never was such a man."

"I have learned two or three things in my years of experience," he said. "One is, never paint a blue sky." "Why?" I asked. "Why, because it looks like the devil, that's all. Another thing; a horizon is horrible—that straight line!"

Asked if he ever prepared canvases by underlaying with rich color, he said, "Never." Sometimes he scraped off old canvases and thought them very superior to paint on, but he never tried any but the most direct and simple methods.

I pressed him for a definition of what he considered the essential, the most important quality in painting, but he replied like one who had given little thought to distinctions or reasoning of this kind. I tried to reach his real judgment by asking if he did not think that beauty exists in nature actually and in fact had always existed, and must be discovered and revealed, simply and frankly. Quick as a flash he answered, "Yes, but the rare thing is to find a painter who knows a good thing when he sees it!" He added, "It is a gift to be able to see the beauties of nature."

Referring at another time to the power of seeing, he observed, "You must not paint everything you see. You must wait, and wait patiently until the exceptional, the wonderful effect or aspect comes. Then, if you have sense enough to see it—well," he quaintly added, "that is all there is to that."

This seemed to me to touch the very core of the question. The power to see, to comprehend the exceptional qualities existing in nature, is a gift possessed by few men and these few become the great masters. It is the first and highest requisite in the pursuit of art. Homer never wasted effort on unimportant things. He never painted simply for the purpose of correctly representing natural objects or scenes. He knew perfectly that only the exceptional, the dominant or characteristic, is important. His thought was to select with care and then to be prepared, to lie in wait, to stand ready to put forth a supreme effort when the moment should arrive, when the desired effect should come. This I believe was his constant attitude towards nature and art. To select with extreme care and to get the truth of nature direct from nature was his gospel.

Of equal importance was his sense of the value of simplicity. Building upon the power to delineate every detail with precision, he early learned to see broadly, to separate the essential character from the non-essential details. This was one of the most important factors in his success. It is a quality of mind which separates the strong from the weak in every walk of life. The narrow mind seizes upon details; the large mind grasps the essentials. If Homer had become a lawyer instead of a painter, this power to grasp essentials would have governed in that relation as surely as it did in his relation to nature. He would have become an able advocate because he would have seized upon the basic facts in every case and concentrated his whole effort upon these.

Rarely did he represent in any of his late canvases more than three or four dominant notes. In the *Northeaster*, as in many other paintings, this quality of simplicity is remarkably exemplified. A few massive rock forms combined with onrushing waves are made to give one a tremendous sense of power and reality. Here we have Homer fully abreast of if not in advance of his time; because if there is any one outstanding characteristic of modern art it is simplicity.

In the Prout's Neck paintings the sense of irresistible force is the dominating note. No word of less significance than power seems adequate to describe them. We have all felt this quality when in the presence of Homer's works. He has expressed the power of the ocean better than has any painter of the past or present. Standing before the *Northeaster*, one seems to feel the very weight and onrushing of the waves, the very vibration of the earth. The late Dr. Gunsaulus, who owned *On a Lee Shore*, expressed in a whimsical way the feeling here suggested. He said that the picture, hung in his rather small library, gave him the feeling that he might be washed out of his home at any moment.

In the noble group of paintings produced by Homer at Prout's Neck, we probably have his highest achievement. They undoubtedly form the foundation of his great reputation. Limited in subject, as they were, they at once express the power of a great painter and the majesty of the ocean. These remarkable pictures came one after another from Homer's seclusion into the art world with startling effect. They breathed a spirit of truth and

sincerity which literally commanded respect. During these years a few great American painters were producing important works, but these Prout's Neck paintings differed in content from those with which art lovers were familiar and aroused profound admiration among the few men who were capable of understanding them.

Then Homer turned from Prout's Neck to the Bahamas to seek rest and recreation, and the result was the most amazing watercolors ever produced in this country. Indeed, I think nothing like these latter works, for directness and power, has been produced in the field of watercolor painting in our time. It would seem as if this power was only fully realized when he was at play with color, when he had "given up the business" and gone to the Bahamas in a spirit of pleasure-seeking and not of work. All his gifts of observation and concentration, and an astonishing freedom of touch, long walled up and controlled in the interest of producing what he probably considered more serious work, seemed to break forth with unbounded freedom. Free from anxiety, free also from interest in public exhibitions and purchasers, conscious of his power, he literally revelled in the simple ability to do the thing for the sake of doing it. It was in this mood that he wrote, "What is the use? The people are too stupid. They do not understand." He was now free, free to enjoy his art without thought of others.

And thus did one of our strongest painters begin and end his career—a career uneventful on the surface, even prosaic, but stirred all the while by deep currents of sincerity and power. Withdrawing from active affairs and from intercourse with his fellow painters, choosing rather to associate with his family and a few friends that he might the better serve his own purpose in the remaining years of his life, he made a contribution which is destined long to continue a milestone in the progress of our national art.

CHRONOLOGY, NOTES, BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX

CHRONOLOGY

1836. Born in Boston Feb. 24.

About 1842. Family moved to Cambridge.

1854 or 1855. Apprenticed to Bufford, lithographer.

1857. Left Bufford Feb. 24. First illustration in *Ballou's* June 6; in *Harper's Weekly* Aug. 1.

1859. Moved to New York, autumn.

1859-1861. Attended drawing school in Brooklyn, probably 1860. Studied in National Academy night school about 1861.

1861. Moved to New York University Building. Covered Lincoln's inauguration, March 4. Around Boston, summer. Visited Army of the Potomac, Oct. Studied painting with Rondel.

1862. On Peninsular Campaign, April 1 to about early May. First adult oil, *Sharpshooter*, late 1862.

1863-1865. Occasional trips to the front. War paintings and illustrations. Rural paintings began in 1864.

1864. Elected Associate of National Academy.

1865. *Pitching Quoits.* Elected National Academician.

1866. *Prisoners from the Front. Croquet* (two versions). Sailed for France, late 1866.

1867. In France until fall.

1868. In White Mountains, summer. *Bridle Path.* Active as illustrator of magazines and books, 1868-1874.

1869. In White Mountains, summer.

1870. *High Tide.* In Adirondacks. *Adirondack Lake* (two versions).

1871. *Country School.*

1872. Moved to Tenth Street Studios. *Snap the Whip* (two versions).

1873. At Gloucester, June and July; first watercolor series.

1874. In Adirondacks, June; watercolors.

1875. Last illustration in *Harper's Weekly.* In Virginia; watercolors. Oils of negro subjects, 1875-1879. In York, Maine, July.

1876. *Cotton Pickers, Fair Wind, Two Guides.*

1877. *Carnival.* Helped found the Tile Club.

1878. Painted tiles. Summer at Houghton Farm; watercolors.

1879. *Upland Cotton, Shepherdess.* At West Townsend, summer. Drawings of farm children.

1880. *Camp Fire.* Summer at Gloucester; watercolors.

1881. To England, spring. Watercolors and drawings at Tynemouth. *Early Evening.* Possibly returned to America, winter of 1881-2.

1882. In England by spring. Watercolors and drawings at Tynemouth. *Hark! the Lark;* shown at Royal Academy. Returned to America, Nov.

1883. Large watercolors based on English sketches. *Coming Away of the Gale*, National Academy, spring. At Atlantic City, early summer. Settled in Prout's Neck, summer. Watercolors of shore and surf. Exhibition of English watercolors at Doll & Richards, Dec.

1884. Finished *Life Line;* National Academy, spring. Trip with a fishing fleet; drawings. Started *Eight Bells.* To Nassau, Dec.

1885. In Nassau about two months; watercolors. To Cuba; watercolors. Left Cuba late March. *Fog Warning, Herring Net.*

1886. In Florida, Jan.; watercolors. Finished *Eight Bells, Lost on the Grand Banks, Undertow.*

1887-1889. Watercolors of Prout's Neck, 1887. Etchings, 1887-9. Civil War illustrations for the *Century*, 1887-8. No oils dated 1887-9.

1889. In Adirondacks, summer and early fall; watercolors.

1890. In Florida, probably early in year; watercolors. Exhibition of Adirondack watercolors at Reichard, Feb. *Summer Night, Sunlight on the Coast, Winter Coast, Signal of Distress.* Thomas B. Clarke began extensive collecting of his work about 1890.

1891. Four 1890 oils shown at Reichard, Feb. In Adirondacks, summer and early fall; watercolors; *Huntsman and Dogs. West Wind.*

1892. In Adirondacks, summer and early fall; watercolors. Finished *Hound and Hunter, Coast in Winter.*

1893. *Fox Hunt*, finished March. Visited World's Fair, Chicago. No watercolors.

1894. Finished *Below Zero, Fog, High Cliff, Stormbeaten.* In Adirondacks, June; watercolors. Watercolors of Prout's Neck.

1895. *Cannon Rock, Maine Coast, Northeaster.* In Quebec, Aug. and Sept.; watercolors.

1896. *The Wreck*, finished Sept.; awarded $5,000 purchase prize at Carnegie Institute, Dec. *The Lookout.* No watercolors.

1897. In Quebec, summer; watercolors. *Light on the Sea, Wild Geese.*

1898. No oils. Father died Aug. 22. To Nassau, Dec.

1899. In Nassau Jan. and Feb.; watercolors. Clarke Sale, Feb. 15-18. *Gulf Stream*, started Sept. In Bermuda, Dec. into early 1900; watercolors.

1900. In Adirondacks, June; watercolors. Started *Early Morning* Sept. 26. Finished *On a Lee Shore*, Oct.; *Eastern Point*, Oct. 14; *West Point*, Dec. 23.

1901. May have visited Bermuda; watercolors. *Searchlight*, Dec.

1902. In Quebec, Aug.; watercolors. *Early Morning* finished, Oct.

1903. No oils. To Florida, Dec. through Feb. 1904; watercolors.

1904. *Summer Squall* finished May. *Kissing the Moon* finished Nov. 15. *Cape Trinity* finished Nov. To Florida, Dec. through Jan. 1905; no work.

1905. *Diamond Shoal*, last dated watercolor. Started *Shooting the Rapids*, Oct.; never finished. To Atlantic City, Dec.

1906. Long illness, summer. No new works from fall 1905 to fall 1908.

1907. Repainted *Early Evening*, Nov.

1908. Suffered paralytic stroke, May. To Adirondacks, June and July. *Right and Left* started Nov., finished Jan. 1909.

1909. *Driftwood*, finished Nov.

1910. Died at Prout's Neck Sept. 29.

NOTES

The first number is that of the page; the second, following the colon, is the line on the page. Thus, 4:15-18 is page 4, lines 15 to 18. There are 34 lines on a full page.

All publications cited were published in New York unless otherwise noted. References to the *Art Journal* are to the American edition unless otherwise noted. No attempt has been made to give references to Downes' book.

1. For genealogical information I am indebted to the late Morgan H. Stafford.

3:30. *Art Journal*, Aug. 1878. "American Painters—Winslow Homer and F. A. Bridgman," unsigned. Reprinted with minor changes in *American Painters* by George W. Sheldon, 1879. Later references to Sheldon refer to this article.

4:15-18. The drawing *Beetle and Wedge* which Downes (p. 25-26) said was done at eleven, was probably done in the 1870's, judging by style.

4:26. M. A. De Wolfe Howe, editor: *Later Years of the Saturday Club*.

4:28-33. *Harper's Weekly*, Oct. 22, 1910, p. 13. "Some Recollections of Winslow Homer" by J. Eastman Chase.

5:11. Date of his going to Bufford's: Sheldon says, "He stayed for two years, or until he was twenty-one."

7:5. *Ballou's Pictorial*, April 25, 1857.

7:31. None of Homer's woodblocks have been found, but general practice was to draw directly on the block up to the late 1870's, when drawings on paper began to be photographed on the block and the originals preserved. That his work was not redrawn by others is proved by its pronounced style and by the contrasting lack of character in his redrawn war drawings of May 1862, also by the absence of originals until those of the late 1870's, reproduced photomechanically. The style also indicates that he used pencil and some wash, both gray and white; areas of washes are often visible. Also his extant drawings of this period were usually in pencil, sometimes with wash; less often in crayon or charcoal; only rarely in pen and ink.

10:16. He must have come to New York after Sept. 9, 1859, date of the review near Concord shown in *Harper's*, Sept. 24, and before Dec. 24, date of the first *Harper's* illustration of New York scenes. *Ballou's* had only one drawing by him after August.

10:20-22. *Ballou's Pictorial*, Dec. 24, 1859.

11:7-13. Quoted by courtesy of Mrs. Hugh E. Montgomery.

12:33-13:18. *Our Young Folks*, July 1866. "Among the Studios—III" by T. B. Aldrich.

14:8-15. *Harper's Weekly*, June 3, 1865.

14:23-34. Date of his first visit to the front. Aldrich in *Our Young Folks*, 1866: "Shortly after the beginning of the war, Mr. Homer went to Virginia, and followed for a while the fortunes of the Army of the Potomac. . . . He returned North with a year's experience of camp-life and a portfolio of valuable studies." Sheldon in the *Art Journal*, 1878: "Funds being scarce, he got an appointment from the Harpers as artist-correspondent at the seat of war, and went to Washington where he drew sketches of Lincoln's inauguration, and afterwards to the front with the first batch of soldier-volunteers. Twice again he made a trip to the Army of the Potomac, these times independently of the publishers." Later writers simply repeat Sheldon.

On the other hand, no illustrations from Washington or Virginia in the spring and summer of

1861 (except those of the Inauguration) show any evidence of being by him; whereas several signed by him were obviously done in New York or New England. A letter from *Harper's*, Oct. 8, 1861, owned by the Washington Headquarters Association, New York, says: "The bearer, Mr. Winslow Homer, is a special artist attached to Harper's Weekly, and is at present detailed for duty with the Army of the Potomac. Commanding generals and other persons in authority will confer a favor by granting to Mr. Homer such facilities as the interests of the service will permit for the discharge of his duties as our artist-correspondent." An illustration on Nov. 23 was the first to give evidence of his having been with the army. This and two following were evidently drawn on the block by him, so he was probably back in New York by mid-November; certainly no later than Dec. 13, opening date of the Great Fair pictured Dec. 28.

15:26-16:12. The Peninsular Campaign. The military pass illustrated in Downes opp. p. 34 was issued at Washington April 1, 1862. The Alexandria drawing, owned by Cooper Union, New York, is dated April 2. Four illustrations of May 3 and 17 pictured events before Yorktown, the latest showing Union troops on May 4 pursuing the Confederates who had just evacuated the city. All were captioned "from sketches" or "sketched by" Homer, none were signed, and their style shows they were redrawn by another artist.

Four illustrations beginning June 14 were signed and evidently drawn on the block by him, and were of general subjects, not specific events like those preceding; hence they were probably drawn in New York. The date of the first indicates he left the front not later than the end of May. Had he witnessed the campaign from the fall of Yorktown to the battle of Fair Oaks on May 31 and June 1, he would surely have illustrated it. Several drawings and paintings show the siege of Yorktown, but none the subsequent campaign.

It is true that *Harper's* text on *A Bayonet Charge* links it to the battle of Fair Oaks, but it does not say that Homer was present. Many battle scenes were drawn by staff artists in New York, and there is nothing in the illustration itself to connect it with Fair Oaks. This is borne out by the illustration and comment of Harper's "special artist," A. R. Waud, Aug. 16, 1862, giving what he calls a correct version of the bayonet charge at Fair Oaks.

17:5-19. Evidence for Homer's visits to the front after the Peninsular Campaign: Two illustrations in Jan. 1863 and Feb. 1864 of winter scenes in the army. Several drawings of soldiers dated 1863 and 1864, at Cooper Union and elsewhere. Records of the Union League Club of New York on their painting, *A Skirmish in the Wilderness*, quote Charles B. Curtis, an official of the club: "Mr. Homer informs me that . . . it was painted from sketches made on the spot about the time of the battle." *Defiance*, oil, 1864, was formerly inscribed on the back: "Inviting a Shot before Petersburg, Va., 1864. W. Homer." An undated drawing of the terrain, obviously done on the spot, is in Cooper Union. Of his illustrations for the *Century* in 1886 and 1887, based on wartime sketches, two were dated 1865, and that of Lincoln, Tad and Grant was captioned "Sketched from life." He told James E. Kelly the same. A third, undated, captioned "Two of Sheridan's Scouts. Sketched from life," was used in a watercolor painted in 1887 for James J. Higginson, to whom he wrote: "They were drawn from life, when in advance of the Army on its last campaign March 28th 1865."

18:10-12. André Michel, editor: *Histoire de l'Art*, vol. 8, 1929. "L'Art aux États-Unis et au Canada" by Louis Gillet.

18:13-16. In 1906, giving the National Academy data about where he studied, he said only: "F. Rondel, New York, & Academy of Design."

18:22-28. *Amer. Art News*, Oct. 29, 1910, p. 4.

19:13-17. *Harper's Weekly*, May 2, 1863.

21:27-30. Henry T. Tuckerman: *Book of the Artists*, 1867, p. 491.

21:30-34. Clarence Cook: *Art and Artists of Our Time*, 1888, vol. 3, p. 256.

23:8-10. *Appleton's Journal*, Nov. 6, 1869, p. 379.

23:13-15. G. W. Sheldon: *American Painters*, 1879, p. 19.

24:13-15. Miss Addie Williams, friend of Thomas Eakins.

24:29-25:2. New York *Herald*, Dec. 4, 1910, Magazine Section, "John La Farge and Winslow Homer."

25:14-16. *Art Review*, Feb. 1887, p. 13. "Winslow Homer" by Augustus Stonehouse.

27:14-18. *Every Saturday*, Aug. 26, 1871, p. 214.

27:21-22. *Harper's Weekly*, May 14, 1870, p. 307.

28:11-15. *Nation*, Nov. 15, 1866, p. 395.

31:20-23. *Art Journal*, April 1880, p. 105.

35:15-25. *Harper's Weekly*, Oct. 22, 1910, p. 13.

35:28-31. *Art Review*, Feb. 1887, p. 12.

36:1-9. Royal Cortissoz: *John La Farge*, 1911, p. 70.

36:10-29. N. Y. *Herald*, Dec. 4, 1910.

38:27-30. Royal Cortissoz: *John La Farge*, 1911, p. 129.

39:5-7. *Nation*, Nov. 22, 1867, p. 416.

39:13-14. *Art Journal*, London, Nov. 1, 1867.

39:22-25. Information from Mahonri Young.

39:30-40:3. New York *Herald*, Dec. 4, 1910.

40:8-12. *Harper's Weekly*, Nov. 23, 1867, p. 738.

40:18-24. Letter owned by Charles H. Voorhees.

40:34-41:8. *Art Review*, Feb. 1887, p. 12-13.

45:6-12. Manuscript Memoirs of James E. Kelly owned by Dr. George Hope Ryder, quoted by his courtesy and that of their editor, Mr. Robert Bruce.

45:21-24. *Appleton's Journal*, March 1, 1873, p.316.

46:7-10. I find no evidence for the often-repeated statement that he was an organizer of the Water Color Society in 1866. At that time he had not taken up the medium seriously; he did not exhibit with the Society until 1874 and was not listed as a member until 1877.

47:11-49:6. Manuscript Memoirs of James E. Kelly.

51:1-3. *Nation*, July 13, 1865.

51:4-14. *Harper's Weekly*, May 14, 1870, p. 307.

51:25-31. *Art Journal*, March 1875, p. 92.

51:31-52:2. *Art Journal*, June 1876, p. 189.

52:3-19. *Nation*, Feb. 17, 1876, p. 120.

52:20-23. *Art Journal*, May 1877, p. 159.

52:23-27. *Appleton's Journal*, May 8, 1875, p. 599.

52:29-53:7. *Century Ill. Mag.*, Nov. 1883, p. 14-15.

53:8-54:26. *Galaxy*, July 1875. "On Some Pictures Lately Exhibited" by Henry James, Jr., p. 90, 93-94.

56:12-15. *Art Journal*, March 1877, p. 95.

56:17-28. New York *Herald*, Dec. 4, 1910.

57:20-25. *Amer. Art News*, Oct. 29, 1910, p. 4.

57:25-58:5. Charles Dudley Warner: *In the Wilderness*, 1878, p. 86-92.

59:26-29. *Art Amateur*, May 1880, p. 112.

60:9-15. *Art Journal*, May 1879, p. 158-159.

60:25-34. *A Book of the Tile Club*, 1887.

61:1-29. *Scribner's Monthly Mag.*, Jan. 1879, p. 401-409. "The Tile Club at Work" by W. Mackay Laffan.

63:30-33. *Nation*, March 6, 1879, p. 171.

63:34-64:10. G. W. Sheldon: *Hours with Art and Artists*, 1882, p. 141.

64:30-33. *Amer. Art News*, Oct. 29, 1910.

65:8-67:1. *Art Journal*, April 1880, p. 105-109. "Sketches and Studies, II," unsigned. Reprinted in G. W. Sheldon: *Hours with Art and Artists*, 1882, p. 136-141.

67:14-17. *Harper's Weekly*, Oct. 22, 1910, p. 13.

69:4. *Art Amateur*, Feb. 1881, p. 48.

69:5-19. *Nation*, Feb. 3, 1881, p. 80.

70:1-12. *Art Journal*, Nov. 1878, p. 348-350.

70:16-17. Edward Strahan, editor: *The Art Treasures of America*, Phila., 1879, vol. 2, p. 91.

70:21-23. *Art Journal*, Aug. 1878, p. 227.

70:28-71:5. *Art Journal*, May 1877, p. 159.

71:5-18. S. G. W. Benjamin: *Art in America*, 1880, p. 117.

71:21-25. *Art Review*, Feb. 1887, p. 12.

72:7-23. Letter owned by Harold T. Pulsifer.

73:1-5. *Art Journal*, April 1880, p. 127; May 1880, p. 159. *Scribner's Monthly*, June 1880, p. 313. *Amer. Art Review*, 1880, p. 269.

73:5-7. Information from Benjamin K. Smith, James W. Young, Miss Abby M. Raymond and others. Many watercolors and drawings of 1878-9 have been found in Chicago.

73:9-16. Manuscript Memoirs of James E. Kelly.

73:16-22. *Art Review*, Feb. 1887, p. 13.

73:24-26. *Art Amateur*, Aug. 1879, p. 50.

73:27-32. *Art Interchange*, Dec. 22, 1880, p. 129.

73:33-74:19. Manuscript Memoirs of James E. Kelly.

76:1-9. Dates of Homer's stay in England. He showed at the Water Color Society in early 1881 but not at the Academy, so he may have sailed before the latter's opening in early April. Of works dated 1881 only one oil and one watercolor are American, while one oil and 37 watercolors are English. He dated drawings at Tynemouth on Oct. 14 and 20, 1881. He may have returned to America in the winter of 1881-2, as there are no English winter subjects; also some English watercolors were shown at the Water Color Society in Feb. 1882 and the Boston Art Club in late April, and he was listed in the New York City directory for the year ending May 1, 1882. But the Water Color Society catalogue listed him as a "non-resident member," with no address.

In the catalogue of the Royal Academy exhibition opening in early May 1882 his address was Cullercoats, Newcastle-on-Tyne. A Tynemouth

drawing is dated June 1882. One oil, eight watercolors and 17 drawings of English subjects are dated 1882.

A few watercolors and drawings of Flamborough Head and Bridlington Quay in Yorkshire, and Yarmouth in Norfolk, show some travelling along the East Coast. But most of his work was of Tynemouth.

His letter from Cullercoats to William B. Long in New York, Nov. 4, 1882, said he intended to sail "next Saturday by the Cunard liner 'Catalonia.' " A letter of Jan. 20, 1883, proves he was in New York at that date. In the Water Color Society and Academy shows of 1883 he was represented, with a New York address. The *Studio*, N. Y., May 1883, said: "Winslow Homer leaves soon to settle permanently at Scarboro, Maine." Most of the summer of 1883 was spent in Maine. There is no evidence that he returned to England.

It is true that 20 watercolors of English subjects are dated 1883. But since some were based on English sketches dated 1881 or 1882, some look like studio work, and four of the largest were in the Water Color Society show opening Feb. 1, 1883, it seems likely that they were painted or finished in America. Only about half of the English subjects dated 1883 look as if done on the spot, and may have been postdated, perhaps before his exhibition at Doll & Richards in December, in which almost all were included. Several English drawings shown at Doll & Richards in 1884 were thus postdated, one bearing two dates, 1882 and 1884. I have found no English drawings dated 1883, as against many dated 1881 and 1882; and drawings are more apt to be done on the spot than watercolors. Homer himself, replying to Downes' request for biographical information in 1910, wrote, "I was in Tynemouth in 1881 and 1882, and worked there," but said nothing about 1883.

76:12-77:2. *Mag. of Art*, London, vol. 6, 1883, p. 114-121. "The Coaly Tyne" by Aaron Watson.

80:6-17. *Century Ill. Mag.*, Nov. 1883. "An American Artist in England" by M. G. Van Rensselaer, p. 17, 19.

81:5-82:14. Worcester Art Museum *Annual*, vol. 3, 1937-1938, p. 68-73. "A 'Lost' Winslow Homer" by Lloyd Goodrich.

81:17-21. New York *News*, April 2, 1883.

81:21-23. Boston *Daily Advertiser*, April 14, 1883.

81:25-28. New York *Sun*, April 2, 1883.

85:1-5. Information from Mahonri Young. Also *Fine Arts*, April 1932: "Water Colors by Winslow Homer" by Theodore Bolton, p. 18.

87:4-9. New York *Times*, April 5, 1884.

87:20-21. New York *Herald*, April 5, 1884.

87:22-31. New York *Herald*, April 7, 1884.

88:14. Downes dated his Nassau and Cuba trip in the winter of 1885-6. But the watercolors are dated 1885 (one "Jan. 5, 1885") and were exhibited at Reichard's in Dec. 1885.

90:30-31. No work done in Cuba dated later than 1885 is known, and only two Bahama watercolors dated between 1885 and 1898, *The Gulf Stream* in the Art Institute of Chicago and *The Sponge Diver* in the Boston Museum, both dated 1889. The former is a combination of two 1885 watercolors and was probably not painted from nature. The latter is similar in style to his Nassau work of 1898, and the difference in writing between signature and date makes it probable they were written at different times, which might have caused an error in dating.

95:5-13. New York *Tribune*, April 2, 1887.

95:13-19. *Nation*, April 14, 1887.

95:20-27. Mrs. Schuyler Van Rensselaer: *Six Portraits*, 1889, p. 263-264.

98:4-7. Letter owned by M. J. Rosenau.

99:28-32. *Harper's Weekly*, Oct. 22, 1910, p. 13.

101:3-13. *World's Work*, Feb. 1911, p. 14009: "Winslow Homer" by Arthur Hoeber. *Art in America*, April 1936, p. 84: "A Winslow Homer Miscellany" by F. F. Sherman.

107:17-31. *Courier-Citizen*, Lowell, Mass., Feb. 26, 1936, address by Mrs. Julian Talbot.

108:1-9. Andrew J. Graham: *Autobiographical Notes, Verses and Other Writings*. Charles River, Mass., 1936, p. 56.

110:14-18. Letters of 1915 by F. S. Dellenbaugh and W. H. Goodyear, owned by the Brooklyn Museum.

113:24-32. Letter owned by Robert B. Campbell.

117:28-30. *Art Amateur*, April 1890, p. 93.

117:30-31. *Art Interchange*, March 1, 1890.

117:31-118:10. New York *Sun*, late Feb. or early March, 1890.

118:10-15. *Art Amateur*, April 1890, p. 93.

121:17. *Art Interchange*, Jan. 31, 1891, p. 34.

121:18-27. *Collector*, Feb. 1, 1891, p. 78.

121:27-31. *Art Amateur*, Feb. 1891, p. 55.

123:9-20. *Collector*, Jan. 1, 1892.

123:27-33. *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, March 1933, p. 64.

125:30-32. G. W. Sheldon: *American Painters*, 1879, p. 32.

127:12-14. Letter owned by Mrs. Mahonri Young.

128:9-15. Manuscript reminiscences of Homer by Mr. G. Glen Gould.

128:34-129:4. *Catalogue of the Private Collection of Thomas B. Clarke*, 1899, p. 9.

131:12-14. *Art in America*, April 1936, p. 85.

133:3-7. Helen W. Henderson: *The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and Other Collections of Philadelphia*, Boston, 1911, p. 134.

133:8-16. *Art in America*, April 1936, p. 85.

138:26-29. New York *Evening Post*, Jan. 6, 1896.

141:21-28. *Art Interchange*, June 1897, p. 146.

144:21-23. *Art Interchange*, May 1897, p. 119.

144:23-27. *Art News*, May 1897.

144:28-32. New York *Tribune*, March 28, 1897.

144:33-145:2. Boston *Transcript*, March 30, 1897.

145:26. New York *Tribune*, March 28, 1897.

145:26-28. New York *Sun*, March 31, 1897.

146:29-147:21. Information and letters furnished by George Van Felson.

150:26-30. Harrison S. Morris: *Confessions in Art*, 1930, p. 62.

151:7-152:3. Cecilia Beaux: *Background with Figures*, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1930, p. 211.

152:22-33. Andrew J. Graham: *Autobiographical Notes, Verses and Other Writings*, Charles River, Mass., 1936, p. 55.

153:21-26. Known prices of oils in the 1890's: *Fog Warning* sold for $1,500, 1893; *Gale*, $750, 1893; *Fox Hunt*, priced $2,500 in 1893, sold for $1,200 in 1894; *Signal of Distress* and *High Seas*, $1,700 for both, 1896; *Storm-beaten*, $1,500 ($1,300 to Homer), 1896; *To the Rescue*, $250, 1896; *Maine Coast* and *Lookout*, $800 each, 1897; *Sunset*, *Saco Bay*, $1,000, 1897; *Wild Geese*, $1,500, 1899. The $5,000 he got for *The Wreck* was a prize, not a purchase price. *Summer Night*, $2,000 asked, 1891; *Below Zero*, $1,500 asked, 1894; both unsold.

154:8-19. Letter owned by Mrs. Mahonri Young.

155:3-10. New York *Sun*, March 11, 1898.

155:11-20. New York *Tribune*, March 12, 1898.

156:24-27. New York *Sun*, Feb. 19, 1899.

156:27. New York *Press*, Feb. 19, 1899.

160:20-21. Seven Bermuda watercolors are dated 1901. On the other hand, his letters mention only one visit. The watercolors may have been painted on his first visit and postdated.

161:11-17. *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, Feb. 1911, p. 43.

162:7-12. Harrison S. Morris: *Confessions in Art*, 1930, p. 63.

165:19-27. Quoted by courtesy of Dr. George H. Heye.

166:18-24. Brooklyn *Daily Eagle*, March 31, 1901.

166:24-25. *Artist*, May 1901.

166:25-26. *Art Interchange*, May 1901, p. 105-106.

167:1-10. A complete list of Homer's awards: World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893, gold medal. Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1896, Academy Medal of Honor. Carnegie Institute, 1896, Chronological Medal and purchase of *The Wreck*. Exposition Internationale Universelle, Paris, 1900, gold medal. Pan-American Exposition, Buffalo, 1901, gold medal for watercolors. Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1902, Temple gold medal for *Northeaster*. South Carolina Inter-State and West Indian Exposition, Charleston, 1902, gold medal for *Cannon Rock*. Louisiana Purchase Exposition, St. Louis, 1904, gold medal.

168:26-30. *Harper's Weekly*, Oct. 22, 1910, p.13.

168:31-32. Letter owned by Robert B. Campbell.

169:17-23. *Harper's Weekly*, Oct. 22, 1910, p.13.

173:17-21. New York *Evening Sun*, Jan. 11, 1902.

173:22-24. New York *Tribune*, Jan. 11, 1902.

175. Letters of March 15 and 30 and Oct. 29, 1902, owned by the Cleveland Museum of Art.

176:33-177:7. New York *Times*, March 29, 1903.

177:7-13. Brooklyn *Daily Eagle*, April 2, 1903.

185:1-5. Letter owned by Robert B. Campbell.

186:15-19. *Harper's Weekly*, Oct. 22, 1910, p. 13.

187:12-20. *American Art News*, Dec. 29, 1906.

189:15-17. Works owned by museums during Homer's lifetime (oils unless otherwise noted): MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON: *Fog Warning*, gift, 1894; *Lookout*, purchase, 1899; *Leaping Trout*, *Ouananiche Fishing*, *Indian Camp*, *Trout Fishing*, watercolors, purchases, 1899. BOWDOIN COLLEGE MUSEUM: *End of the Hunt*, wc., bequest, 1903. BROOKLYN MUSEUM: *Unruly Calf*, gift, 1906. CARNEGIE INSTITUTE: *Wreck*, pur-

chase, 1896. CINCINNATI MUSEUM: *Hauling in the Anchor*, wc., purchase, 1906. CORCORAN ART GALLERY: *Light on the Sea*, purchase, 1907; *Hudson River—Logging*, wc., purchase, 1903. LAYTON ART GALLERY, MILWAUKEE: *Hark! the Lark*, purchase between 1890 and 1902. LUXEMBOURG MUSEUM, PARIS: *A Summer Night*, purchase, 1900. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART: *Cannon Rock*, gift, 1906; *Searchlight, Harbor Entrance*, gift, 1906; *Gulf Stream*, purchase, 1906; *Harvest Scene*, purchase, 1909; *Northeaster*, gift, 1910. NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART: *High Cliff*, gift, 1907; *Visit from the Old Mistress*, gift, 1907. PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY: *Fox Hunt*, purchase, 1894. MUSEUM OF HISTORIC ART, PRINCETON UNIVERSITY: *Trysting Place*, wc., bequest, 1898. RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL OF DESIGN: *On a Lee Shore*, purchase, 1901; *Waiting for the Hunt*, wc., gift, 1894. SMITH COLLEGE MUSEUM: *Song of the Lark*, purchase, probably in 1870's or 1880's. WORCESTER ART MUSEUM: *Old Friends*, wc., purchase, 1908.

190-195. Several of these stories appear in "Winslow Homer, a Painter of the Sea" by Arthur Hoeber in *World's Work*, Feb. 1911.

190:25-29. Harrison S. Morris: *Confessions in Art*, 1930, p. 63.

192:15-34. Letter from Leon Kroll.

193:5-11. *American Review of Reviews*, Nov. 1923, p. 534. "American Art at Paris" by John W. Beatty.

193:21-194:17. Letter owned by Robert B. Campbell.

199:17-25. Letter owned by the Massachusetts Historical Society.

200:9-22. *Art Notes*, Macbeth Gallery, Dec. 1910, p. 646.

201:11-14. Portland *Evening Express*, Sept. 30, 1910.

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INDEX

Abbey, Edwin A., 45, 48, 61, 74.
Adams, Edward D., 102.
Adirondacks, 57, 66, 114-118, 122-124, 181, 184,196.
After the Tornado, 161.
Aldrich, Thomas Bailey, 12.
Alexandria, Va., 15, 230.
American Water Color Society, 46, 47, 49, 63, 69, 102, 127, 183, 231.
Appleton's Journal, 42.
Army Boots, 20, 50.
Army Teamsters, 20.
Artists' Fund Society, 25, 49.
Atlantic City, N. J., 86, 94, 185.
Avery, Samuel P., 49, 72.
Awards, 131, 138, 166-167, 233.

Babbott, Frank L., 199.
Baker, Joseph E., 6, 67, 193.
Ballou's Pictorial, 7, 8, 10.
Barbizon School, 37.
Bartlett, Capt. Abraham, 2.
Bartlett, Mary, 2.
Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, 101.
Bayonet Charge, 16, 17, 230.
Beatty, John W., 135, 140, 149, 151, 152, 167, 168, 177-180, 181, 188, 189, 193, 205-226.
Beaux, Cecilia, 151-152.
Beetle and Wedge, 229.
Belmont, Mass., 14, 26.
Below Zero, 134, 187.
Benjamin, S. G. W., 71.
Benson, Eugene, 39.
Benson, Frank W., 142, 152.
Benson, John, 2.
Bermuda, Visit to, 1899-1900, 160, 233.
Bicknell, Albion, 24.
Bixbee, William J., 35, 104, 191.
Bixby, William K., 178.
Blue Boat, 116.
Boston Museum, 156, 157.
Boudin, Eugène, 38.
Bouguereau, A. W., 65.
Bridle Path, 41.
Briggs, Col. George G., 163, 180.
Bright Side, 20, 39.
Brooklyn Art Association, 2, 49.
Brown, J. G., 25, 37, 70.
Bryant, William Cullen, 42.
Buck, Sally, 2.
Bufford, John H., 5-6, 11, 12, 214, 229.
Burroughs, Bryson, 123.

Caffin, Charles H., 166.
Cambridge, Mass., 3, 4, 26.
Camp Fire, 64-65, 66, 129.
Canada, 146-150, 184.
Cannon Rock, 135, 171, 176, 187.
Cape Trinity, Saguenay River, 182.
Carnegie Institute, 140, 149, 150-152, 167, 177, 189, 206, 207, 218-219.
Carnival, 59, 129, 156.
Cavalry Charge, 16.
Centennial Exposition, 1876, 60, 69.
Century Association, 25, 193.
Century Magazine, 101, 230.
Cernay-la-Ville, 39.
Chase, J. Eastman, 4, 35, 67, 99, 168, 169, 186.
Chevreul, M. E., 180, 223.
Children, Pictures of, 29-30, 46, 55, 62-63, 67, 85.
Church, Frederic E., 39, 72.
Civil War, Illustrations of, 14-17, 101, 229-230.
Civil War, Paintings of, 18-22.
Clarke, Thomas B., 81, 101, 128-131, 139, 141, 143, 153, 154-157. Sale, 155-157, 162, 170, 171.
Clinton Hall, 25.
Cloud Shadows, 119, 187.
Coast in Winter, 129, 131-132.
Coffin, William A., 128.
Cole, Joseph Foxcroft, 6.
Coming Away of the Gale, 81-82, 84.
Conch Divers, 89.
Cook, Clarence, 21.
Corcoran Gallery, 187.
Corot, J. B. C., 37, 38.
Cortissoz, Royal, 155.
Cotton Pickers, 59.
Country Life, Pictures of, 9, 26-30, 62-63, 85.
Country School, 69, 72.
Courbet, Gustave, 39, 41.
Croquet, 50.
Cuba, Visit to, 1885, 89-90, 232.
Cullercoats, England, 76.
Cummings, T. S., 12.
Currier, J. Frank, 69.
Curtis, George William, 19.

Damoreau, 7.
Daubigny, C. F., 37.
Defiance, 17, 230.
Degas, H. G. E., 58.
Diamond Shoal, 183.
Doll & Richards, 68, 82, 91, 101, 118, 127, 143, 149, 157, 167, 179.
Downes, William H., 1, 13, 35, 118, 122, 129, 133, 142, 144, 179, 185, 192, 196, 197, 200.

Drawings, 32, 180.
Driftwood, 199.
Duveneck, Frank, 219.

Eakins, Thomas, 34, 52, 56, 94, 160, 168, 186, 199, 201.
Early Evening, 80, 188-189.
Early Morning after a Storm at Sea, 88, 163, 174-178.
Eastern Point, 163-166.
Eight Bells, 91, 93-94, 100, 129, 139, 155, 156.
Eight Bells, etching, 98, 100.
Eleuthera Island, 88.
Elkins, George W., 156.
England, Visit to, 1881-1882, 76-82, 231-232.
Etchings, 97-100, 102, 212.
Evans, William T., 128, 171, 172, 187.
Every Saturday, 42.

Fair Wind, 70, 72.
Fisher Girl, 145.
Fisherman's Day, 115.
Fitch, John, 24, 25.
Florida, 90-91, 180-181, 183.
Fog, 145, 170-171.
Fog Warning, 91-92, 100, 134, 180.
Fox Hunt, 132-134, 221.
France, Visit to, 1866-1867, 39-42.
Freer, Charles L., 189.
Frère, Edouard, 6.

Galaxy, 42.
Gale, 81-82, 129, 156.
Gaul, Gilbert, 74.
Gérôme, J. L., 39, 41.
Getchell, John, 142.
Gloucester, Mass., 46, 67, 70.
Gould, Charles W., 128.
Graham, Rev. Andrew J., 107, 152.
Grande Décharge, 148.
Grant, Ulysses S., 17, 48, 230.
Great Gale. See *Gale*.
Gulf Stream, 90, 161-162, 186, 187.
Gunsaulus, Dr. F. W., 164, 171, 225.

"H", 12.
Halibut Fishing, 91.
Happy Family, 129.
Harbor Island, B. W. I., 88.
Hark! the Lark, 80-81.
Harper's Weekly, 8, 11, 17, 18, 40, 42, 45, 47, 215.
Harrison, Hugh H., 166.
Hartmann, Sadakichi, 144.
Hearn, George A., 128, 171, 173, 187.
Hearth and Home, 42.
Henschel, Charles R., 159.
Herring Net, 91, 92, 100, 128.
High Cliff, 135, 172, 175, 176, 187.
High Seas, 134.
High Tide, 41, 43, 51, 57.
Holland, Dr. James W., 112.
Home, Sweet Home, 19.
Homer, Arthur Benson, 3, 83, 93, 106, 195, 196, 197, 200, 211.
Homer, Mrs. Arthur Benson, 107, 126.
Homer, Arthur P., 106, 142, 201.
Homer, Charles L., 106.
Homer, Charles Savage, Sr., 2, 4, 5, 50, 83, 84, 103-105, 152-153, 214.
Homer, Mrs. Charles Savage, Sr., 2-3, 83, 106, 213-214.
Homer, Charles Savage, Jr., 3, 5, 13, 19, 35, 50, 57, 62, 83, 105-106, 112, 114, 130, 146-148, 161, 167, 174, 184, 185, 200.
Homer, Mrs. Charles Savage, Jr., 105, 106, 194, 213, 218.
Homer, Eleazer, 1.
Homer, Capt. John, 1.
Homosassa, Florida, 181, 183.
Hooper, Edward W., 123, 127.
Houghton Farm, 62-64.
Hound and Hunter, 123-124, 170.
Howland, Alfred C., 11, 24.
Howland, Henry, 11, 40.
Hudson River School, 23, 30, 31, 45.
Hunt, William M., 4, 67.
Huntsman and Dogs, 122-123.

Illustrations, 6-17, 42-45, 101.
Impressionism, 34, 38-39, 41, 68, 69, 95, 165-166, 174, 181, 222.
Incoming Tide, 79.
Inness, George, 125, 128, 154-156.
Inside the Bar, 79, 80.

James, Henry, 53-54.
Japanese art, 34, 38, 52, 60, 117, 132.
Johnson, Eastman, 12, 24, 25, 37, 70.
Johnson, John G., 121.
Johnston, John Taylor, 22, 72.

Keene Valley, N. Y., 57, 64.
Kelly, James E., 45, 47-49, 73-74.
Kelsey, Albert W., 40.
Key West, Fla., 181.
King, Mrs. Landreth O., 126.
Kissing the Moon, 182, 187.
Klackner, C., 99-100.
Knoedler & Co., 149-150, 162, 165, 166, 170-172, 176, 182-184, 186.
Knoedler, Roland, 218.
Kroll, Leon, 192.

La Farge, John, 24-25, 36, 38, 54, 56, 117, 143, 151, 160, 213, 218.
Landscape, 30, 115, 125-126.
Larcom, Lucy, 42, 44.
Last Goose at Yorktown, 19.
Lay, Oliver, 24, 25.
Lee, Henry, 91.
Leeds & Miner, 39.
Life Line, 86-87, 155, 156.
Light on the Sea, 145-146, 187.
Lincoln, Abraham, 13, 15, 17, 48, 230.
Lincoln, Mrs. Roland C., 157.
Lincoln, Tad, 17, 230.
Long Branch, 26, 27.
Long Branch, 41, 51.
Longfellow, Henry W., 42.
Lookout, The—"All's Well," 141-145, 155, 156.
Lost on the Grand Banks, 91, 92-93, 100, 170.
Lotos Club, 144.
Louvre, 39.
Lowell, James R., 42, 44.
Luxembourg Museum, 167.

Macbeth, William, 200.
Maine Coast, 135, 143, 155, 156, 187.
Manet, Edouard, 32, 41.
Mansfield, Burton, 145, 171.
Mantz, Paul, 39.
March Wind, 125.
Martin, Homer D., 24-25, 155.
Mathews Art Gallery, 73.
Mattie, 93, 111.
Mechlin, Leila, 188.
Meissonier, J. L. E., 41.
Mending Nets, 79, 128.
Mending the Tears, 98, 100.
Metropolitan Museum of Art, 23, 156, 161, 185, 187, 193.
Milch, Albert, 193.
Millet, J. F., 37, 38, 39.
Minerva, N. Y., 114.
Mink Pond, 117.
Monet, Claude, 38, 41, 68, 165.
Montagnais Indians, 148.
Moonlight, Wood's Island Light, 142, 155, 187.
Morgan, Charles E., 191, 198.
Morgan, Hallowell, 108.
Morgan, Randal, 198.
Morris, Harrison S., 150, 162, 190.
Mount, William S., 37, 59.
Mount Washington, 25, 27.
Mount Washington, 41.
Mountainville, N. Y., 62.
Museums, Works owned by, 233-234.

Nassau, Visits to: 1885, 88-89, 232; 1898, 158-161.
Nast, Thomas, 15.
National Academy of Design, 11, 12, 19, 21, 23, 25, 49, 69, 97, 127, 183, 187, 193.
Negroes, Pictures of, 20, 58-60, 88, 158.
"New Movement," 69.
New York University Building, 12-13, 18, 25.
Newport, R. I., 10.
Norcross, Grenville, 134, 199.
North Woods Club, 114.
Northeaster, 135, 171, 187.
Nude, 12, 94.

O'Brien & Son, 133, 163, 172, 174-176.
On a Lee Shore, 163-164.
Our Women and the War, 15.
Our Young Folks, 42.

Page, William, 4, 12, 24.
Painting-house, Portable, 135, 164.
Pan-American Exposition, 1901, 160.
Paris, 39-42.
Parsons, Charles, 45, 47.
Peale, Rembrandt, 8.
Peninsular Campaign, 15-17, 19, 230.
Pennsylvania Academy, 97, 134, 138, 167.
Perils of the Sea, etching, 98, 100.
Perry, E. Wood, 24.
Petersburg, Va., 17, 58.
Phelps, Old Mountain, 57.
Pinwell, G. J., 44.
Pissarro, Camille, 68.
Pitching Quoits, 21.
Pointe Bleue, P. Q., 148.
Portage, 147, 149, 150.
Portrait drawings, 6, 8, 12.
Prang, Louis, 111, 113, 168, 185, 193-194.
Prices, 49-50, 71-73, 82, 100-102, 118, 149-150, 155-156, 233.
Prisoners from the Front, 21-22, 26, 39, 51, 72.
Prout's Neck, 83-85, 103-114, 189-195.
Punishment for Intoxication, 18.
Puvis de Chavannes, P., 79.

Quebec, 146-150, 184.

Rainy Day in the Country, 50.
Reichard, Gustav, 91, 101, 117-118, 121, 123, 126-127, 130, 133, 149, 153.
Reinhart, C. S., 45, 61.
Right and Left, 198.
Rimmer, William, 4.
Ritchie, G. W. H., 97, 99.
Roberval, P. Q., 147.
Rondel, Frédéric, 17-18.
Rousseau, Théodore, 37.
Rum Cay, 159, 161.
Ryder, A. P., 137, 156.

Saco Bay, 144.
Saco Bay, Maine, 83.
Saguenay River, 148, 184-185.
St. Botolph Club, 149.
St. John, Lake, 147-148, 184.
Sam, 112.
Sandys, Frederick, 44.
Santiago de Cuba, 89-90, 172.
Sargent, John S., 116, 130, 159.
Saved, etching, small version, 97, 98, 100.
Saved, etching, large version, 99.
Scarboro, Maine, 84.
School Time, 50.
Scotch Mist, 79.
Searchlight, Harbor Entrance, Santiago de Cuba, 90, 172-173, 187.
Seascapes, 119, 134-138.
Seavey, Marie, 108.
Seney, George I., 126, 128.
Seven Days' Battles, 16.
Shall I Tell Your Fortune?, 57.
Shark Fishing, 89.
Sharpshooter, 18.
Sheldon, George W., 3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 17, 31, 64, 65-67, 70, 214.
Shepherdesses, Pictures of, 62-64.
Sherwood, John H., 72.
Ship-building, Gloucester, 44.
Shooting the Rapids, 184.
Shooting the Rapids, Saguenay River, 184-185.
Shurtleff, Russell M., 18, 24, 57, 64.
Signal of Distress, 120-121.
Sisley, Alfred, 68.
Skating on the Ladies' Skating-Pond, 11.
Skirmish in the Wilderness, 17, 19, 230.
Snap the Whip, 34, 43, 69, 72.
Snap the Whip, illustration, 43, 45, 215.
Society of American Artists, 69, 143, 183.
Songs of the War, 15.
Spoor, John A., 170.
Spring, 187.
Stevens, Margery, 1.
Stimson, Dr. Lewis A., 187.
Stonehouse, Augustus, 35, 40, 71, 73.
Storm-beaten, 135, 139, 171.
Studio, Prout's Neck, 84, 109, 209-210.
Summer Night, 119, 121, 122, 167.
Summer Squall, 181.
Sunday Morning, 50.
Sunday Morning in Virginia, 59, 69.
Sunlight on the Coast, 119, 121.
Sunset, Saco Bay, 144, 145.

"Ten American Painters," 154.
Ten Pound Island, Gloucester, 67.
Tenniel, Sir John, 44.
Tennyson, Alfred, 42.
Tenth Street Studios, 25, 56, 85, 86
Tile Club, 60-62.
Tiles, Painted, 60-62.
To the Rescue, 139, 156.
Tourilli, Lake, 146, 147, 184.
Troyon, Constant, 37.
Trumble, Alfred, 121, 123.
Tryon, Florence, 26.
Tuckerman, Henry T., 21.
Turtle Pound, 161.
Two Guides, 57-58, 129.
Tynemouth, 79.
Tynemouth, England, 76-82.

Uncle Ned at Home, 72.
Under the Lighthouse, 150.
Undertow, 94-96, 102.
Union League Club, 154.
Universal Expositions, Paris: 1867, 39, 41; 1878, 69; 1900, 167.
Upland Cotton, 60.

Valentine, Henry C., 50, 63.
Valentine, Lawson, 50, 62, 63, 72.
Van Dyke, John C., 138.
Van Felson, George, 147, 184.
Van Rensselaer, Margaret G., 52, 80, 87, 95.
Visit from the Old Mistress, 59, 69, 129, 156, 187.
Voice from the Cliffs, 79, 80, 82, 98.
Voice from the Cliffs, etching, 98, 100.
Voorhees, Charles H., 11, 40.

Warner, Charles Dudley, 57.
Washington, D. C., 14, 15, 229-230.
Watching the Breakers, 125, 126.
Watching the Breakers: A High Sea, 134.
Watercolors: Gloucester, 1873: 44, 45-47. Houghton Farm, 1878: 62-64, 78. Gloucester, 1880: 67-69, 78, 93. England, 1881-1882: 77-82. Prout's Neck, 1883: 88. Nassau and Cuba, 1885: 88-91, 101. Florida, 1886: 90-91. Prout's Neck, 1887: 101. Florida, 1890: 91. Adirondacks, 1889-1894: 114-118, 124. Canada, 1895 and 1897: 147-150, 157. Nassau, 1898-1899: 158-161. Bermuda, 1899-1901: 160-161. Adirondacks, 1900: 184. Canada, 1902: 184. Florida, 1903-1904: 181.
Waugh, Frederick J., 137-138.
Waverley Oaks, 26.
Waverley Oaks, 40.
Weaning the Calf, 32, 72.
Weather-beaten. See *Storm-beaten*.
Weir, J. Alden, 39, 61, 85, 97, 127, 154.
Weir, John F., 24, 25, 69.

West Point, N. Y., 10, 25.
West Point, Prout's Neck, 163-166.
West Townsend, Mass., 106.
West Wind, 125, 126.
Whistler, J. A. M., 125, 132, 150, 213.
White, Charles S., 100.
White Mountains, 26, 27.
Whittier, John Greenleaf, 42, 44.
Wiggins, Carleton, 97.
Wild Geese, 150, 157, 161.
Winter Coast, 120, 121, 131.
Winter scenes, Maine, 120, 131-134.
Wolfe, Catharine Lorillard, 87.
Women, Pictures of, 27-28, 55-57, 62-64, 77, 79, 85, 86-87, 145-146, 202-203.
Wood-engraving, 7, 43-45, 229.
Worcester Art Museum, 82, 162.
World's Fair, Chicago, 1893, 131.
Wreck, 139-141, 167, 215, 217.
Wreck of the Iron Crown, 78.

Yorktown, Va., 15-16, 230.
Young, James W., 161.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Adirondacks. Watercolor 32
After the Hunt. Watercolor 33
After the Tornado. Watercolor . . . 51
Beach at Long Branch, The. Wood-eng. 12
Berry Pickers, The. Watercolor . . . 15
Bivouac Fire on the Potomac. Wood-eng. 3
Breezing Up 11
Bridle Path, White Mountains, The . 8
Cannon Rock 41
Canoe in Rapids. Watercolor 44
Carnival, The 17
Coast in Winter 38
Conch Divers. Watercolor 26
Country School, The 9
Croquet Scene 7
Deer Drinking. Watercolor 35
Diamond Shoal. Watercolor 61
Driftwood 63
Eagle's Nest. Watercolor 58
Early Morning after a Storm at Sea . . 57
Eight Bells 30
Fair Wind, A 11
Fishing Boats, Key West. Watercolor . 60
Flamborough Head. Drawing 22
Flower Garden and Bungalow, Bermuda. Watercolor 49
Fox Hunt, The 39
Fresh Air. Watercolor 18
Gale, The 23
Gloucester Harbor and Dory. Watercolor 19
Good Shot, A. Watercolor 33
Green Dory, The. Watercolor . . . 19
Gulf Stream, The 52
Herring Net, The 28
High Tide 8
Home, Sweet Home 4
Homework. Watercolor 15
Huntsman and Dogs 34
Husking the Corn. Wood-eng. . . . 3
Kissing the Moon 56
Life Line, The 24
Long Branch 9
Looking Over the Cliff. Watercolor . 20
Lookout, The—"All's Well" 47
Mending Nets. Watercolor 20
Mink Pond. Watercolor. 35
Minnie Clyde. Song-sheet cover . . . 2
Morning Bell, The 7
Nassau. Watercolor 48
Negress with Bananas. Watercolor . . 27
Northeaster 40
Nurse, The 6
On a Lee Shore 54
Ouananiche Fishing. Watercolor . . 42
Ouananiche Fishing. Watercolor . . 45
Perils of the Sea. Etching 25
Pitching Quoits 5
Portage, The. Watercolor 43
Prisoners from the Front 5
Punishment for Intoxication 4
Raid on a Sand-Swallow Colony—"How Many Eggs?" Wood-eng. . . 13
Red Shirt, Homosassa. Watercolor . . 60
Right and Left 62
Road in Bermuda. Watercolor . . . 61
Rum Cay. Watercolor 50
Saved. Etching 25
Searchlight, Harbor Entrance, Santiago . 53
Seaside Sketches—A Clam-bake. Wood-eng. 14
Shark Fishing. Watercolor 26
Shooting the Rapids. Watercolor . . 59
Shooting the Rapids, Saguenay River . 59
Sick Chicken, The. Watercolor . . . 15
Signal of Distress, The 31
Snap the Whip 10
Spring. Watercolor 18
Street Scene, Santiago. Watercolor . . 27
Summer Night, A 36
Sunday Morning in Virginia 17
Trip to Chicoutimi, The. Watercolor . 43
Turtle Pound, The. Watercolor . . . 48
Two Guides, The 16
Two Men in a Canoe. Watercolor . . 42
Tynemouth. Watercolor 22
Undertow 29
Voice from the Cliffs, A. Watercolor . 21
Waiting for a Bite. Wood-eng. . . . 14
Watching a Storm on the English Coast 23
West India Divers. Watercolor . . . 49
West Point, Prout's Neck 55
West Wind, The 37
Winter-Morning, A. Wood-eng. . . . 12
Woodcutter, The. Watercolor . . . 32
Wreck, The 46
Young Ducks. Watercolor 45

WINSLOW HOMER AT THIRTY-ONE

Photograph taken in Paris in 1867. Courtesy of Miss Kate Kelsey

WINSLOW HOMER AT SEVENTY-TWO

Photograph taken at Prout's Neck in 1908

POPPIES
Watercolor by Henrietta Maria Homer

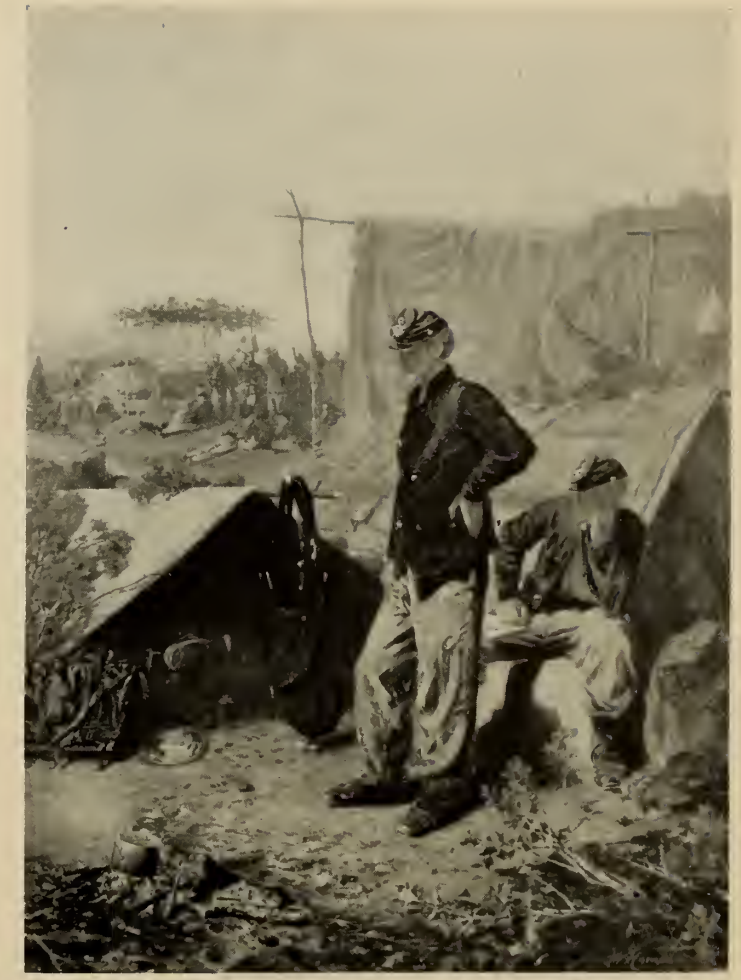
MINNIE CLYDE
Lithographed song-sheet cover by Winslow Homer. 1857

HUSKING THE CORN IN NEW ENGLAND
Wood-engraving. *Harper's Weekly*, Nov. 13, 1858

A BIVOUAC FIRE ON THE POTOMAC
Wood-engraving. *Harper's Weekly*, Dec. 21, 1861

PUNISHMENT FOR INTOXICATION

Oil. 1863. 16½x12½. Canajoharie Library and Art Gallery



HOME, SWEET HOME

Oil. 1863. 21½x16½. Mr. George M. L. LaBranche

PITCHING QUOITS
Oil. 1865. 26½x53½. Fogg Art Museum

PRISONERS FROM THE FRONT
Oil. 1866. 24x38. The Metropolitan Museum of Art

THE NURSE

Oil. 1867. 19x11. Mrs. Hubert Shattuck Howe

THE MORNING BELL

Oil. About 1866. 24x38. Mr. Stephen C. Clark

CROQUET SCENE

Oil. 1866. 16x26. Art Institute of Chicago

THE BRIDLE PATH, WHITE MOUNTAINS
Oil. 1868. 24x38. Whitney Museum of American Art

HIGH TIDE
Oil. 1870. 26x38. The Metropolitan Museum of Art

THE COUNTRY SCHOOL

Oil. 1871. 21x38. Messrs. James W., Pieter W. and Hugh W. Fosburgh

LONG BRANCH

Oil. 1869. 16x22. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

SNAP THE WHIP

Oil. 1872. 22x36½. Butler Art Institute, Youngstown

A FAIR WIND, or BREEZING UP
Oil. 1876. 24x38. National Gallery of Art

A WINTER-MORNING—SHOVELLING OUT
Wood-engraving. *Every Saturday*, Jan. 14, 1871

THE BEACH AT LONG BRANCH
Wood-engraving. *Appleton's Journal*, Aug. 21, 1869

RAID ON A SAND-SWALLOW COLONY—"HOW MANY EGGS?"
Wood-engraving. *Harper's Weekly*, June 13, 1874

WAITING FOR A BITE
Wood-engraving. *Harper's Weekly*, Aug. 22, 1874

SEA-SIDE SKETCHES—A CLAM BAKE
Wood-engraving. *Harper's Weekly*, Aug. 23, 1873

THE BERRY PICKERS
Watercolor. 1873. Mr. Harold T. Pulsifer

THE SICK CHICKEN
Watercolor. 1874. Mr. Harold T. Pulsifer

HOMEWORK
Watercolor. 1874. Canajoharie Library and Art Gallery

THE TWO GUIDES

Oil. 1876. 24x40. Private Collection

SUNDAY MORNING IN VIRGINIA
Oil. 1877. 18x24. Cincinnati Museum Association

THE CARNIVAL
Oil. 1877. 20x30. The Metropolitan Museum of Art

SPRING
Watercolor. 1878. Mrs. Barklie McKee Henry

FRESH AIR
Watercolor. 1878. Brooklyn Museum

GLOUCESTER HARBOR AND DORY
Watercolor. Probably 1880. Fogg Art Museum

THE GREEN DORY
Watercolor. Probably 1880. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

MENDING NETS
Watercolor. 1882. Mr. A. H. Caspary

LOOKING OVER THE CLIFF
Watercolor. 1882. Public Library, Plainfield, N. J.

A VOICE FROM THE CLIFFS

Watercolor. 1883. Mr. Edward Coykendall

FLAMBOROUGH HEAD
Drawing. 1882. Art Institute of Chicago

TYNEMOUTH
Watercolor. 1883. Fogg Art Museum

WATCHING A STORM ON THE ENGLISH COAST
Oil. 1881 or 1882. 12x28. Mrs. Jacob H. Rand

THE GALE
Oil. 1883, repainted 1893. 30½x48½. Worcester Art Museum

THE LIFE LINE

Oil. 1884. 29x45. Philadelphia Museum of Art

SAVED
Etching. 1889

PERILS OF THE SEA
Etching. 1888

CONCH DIVERS
Watercolor. 1885. Minneapolis Institute of Arts

SHARK FISHING
Watercolor. 1885. Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

NEGRESS WITH BANANAS
Watercolor. 1885. Mrs. Bancel La Farge

STREET SCENE, SANTIAGO, CUBA
Watercolor. 1885. Philadelphia Museum of Art

THE HERRING NET

Oil. 1885. 30x48½. Art Institute of Chicago

UNDERTOW

Oil. 1886. 30x48. Private Collection

EIGHT BELLS

Oil. 1886. 25x30. Addison Gallery of American Art

THE SIGNAL OF DISTRESS

Oil. 1890. 24x38. Mr. Charles F. Williams

THE WOODCUTTER
Watercolor. 1891. Mr. John S. Ames

ADIRONDACKS
Watercolor. 1892. Fogg Art Museum

A GOOD SHOT
Watercolor. 1892. Mrs. Charles R. Henschel

AFTER THE HUNT
Watercolor. 1892. Los Angeles County Museum

HUNTSMAN AND DOGS

Oil. 1891. 28x48. Philadelphia Museum of Art

DEER DRINKING
Watercolor. 1892. Private Collection

MINK POND
Watercolor. 1891. Fogg Art Museum

A SUMMER NIGHT

Oil. 1890. 29½x40. Musée du Jeu de Paume, Paris

THE WEST WIND

Oil. 1891. 30x44. Addison Gallery of American Art

COAST IN WINTER

Oil. 1892. 28x48. Worcester Art Museum

THE FOX HUNT

Oil. 1893. 38x68. Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts

NORTHEASTER

Oil. 1895. 34½x50. The Metropolitan Museum of Art

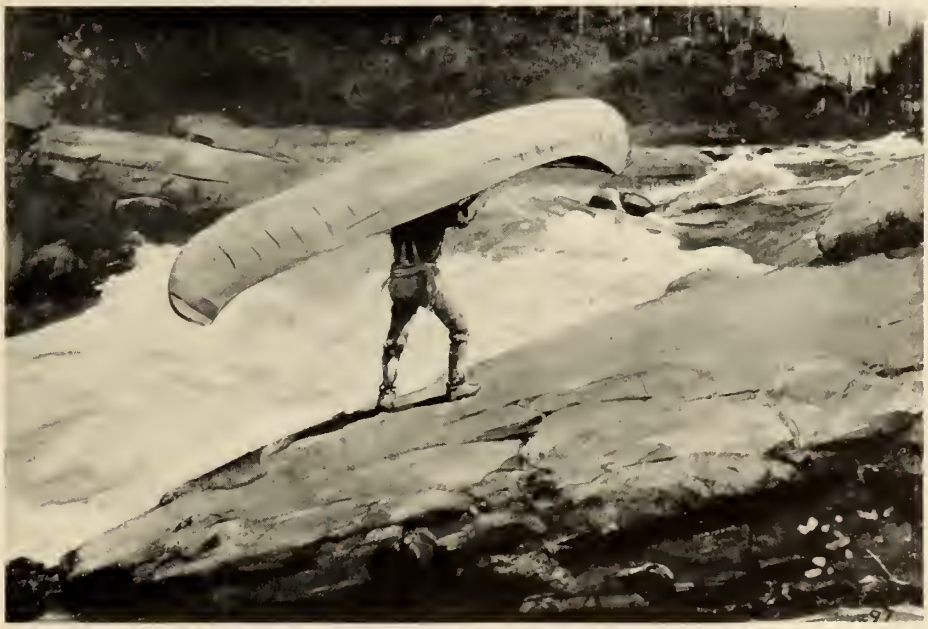
CANNON ROCK

Oil. 1895. 39x39. The Metropolitan Museum of Art

TWO MEN IN A CANOE
Monochrome watercolor. 1895. Mrs. Arthur P. Homer

OUANANICHE FISHING
Watercolor. 1897. Mrs. Hollis French

THE TRIP TO CHICOUTIMI
Watercolor. 1895. Mr. Edwin S. Webster



THE PORTAGE
Watercolor. 1897. Mrs. Richard D. Brixey

CANOE IN RAPIDS
Watercolor. 1897. Fogg Art Museum

OUANANICHE FISHING
Watercolor. 1897. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

YOUNG DUCKS
Watercolor. 1897. Miss E. Adelaide Sargent

THE WRECK

Oil. 1896. 30x48. Carnegie Institute

THE LOOKOUT—"ALL'S WELL"
Oil. 1896. 40x30. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

NASSAU
Watercolor. Probably 1898. Mrs. Robert Wheelwright

THE TURTLE POUND
Watercolor. 1898. Brooklyn Museum

FLOWER GARDEN AND BUNGALOW, BERMUDA
Watercolor. 1899. The Metropolitan Museum of Art

WEST INDIA DIVERS
Watercolor. 1899. Thayer Museum of Art, University of Kansas

RUM CAY

Watercolor. Probably 1898 or 1899. Worcester Art Museum

AFTER THE TORNADO

Watercolor. 1899. Art Institute of Chicago

THE GULF STREAM

Oil. 1899. 29x49. The Metropolitan Museum of Art

SEARCHLIGHT, HARBOR ENTRANCE, SANTIAGO DE CUBA
Oil. 1901. 30½x50½. The Metropolitan Museum of Art

ON A LEE SHORE

Oil. 1900. 39x39. Rhode Island School of Design

WEST POINT, PROUT'S NECK

Oil. 1900. 30x48. Private Collection

KISSING THE MOON

Oil. 1904. 30x40. Estate of Miss Candace C. Stimson

EARLY MORNING AFTER A STORM AT SEA

Oil. 1902. 30½x50. Cleveland Museum of Art

EAGLE'S NEST
Watercolor. 1902. Private Collection

SHOOTING THE RAPIDS
Watercolor. 1902. Brooklyn Museum

SHOOTING THE RAPIDS, SAGUENAY RIVER
Oil, unfinished. 1905. 30x48. The Metropolitan Museum of Art

FISHING BOATS, KEY WEST
Watercolor. 1903. The Metropolitan Museum of Art

RED SHIRT, HOMOSASSA
Watercolor. 1904. Mrs. Charles R. Henschel

ROAD IN BERMUDA
Watercolor. About 1900. Mrs. Ian MacDonald

DIAMOND SHOAL
Watercolor. 1905. Mr. Weld Arnold

RIGHT AND LEFT

Oil. 1909. 28x48½. Mrs. Randal Morgan

DRIFTWOOD

Oil. 1909. 24x28. Mrs. Samuel Emlen Stokes

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